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THE Tongue of Osiris

A MYSTERY STORY

BY MARC EDMUND JONES

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THE TONGUE OF OSIRIS

By MARC EDMUND JONES.

"The tongue of Osiris is sharp;
The tongue of Osiris shall speak!"

CHAPTER ONE.

THE WEDDING IN THE CIRCULAR ROOM.

"IF you can't get out of this thing of yours, Neil, and join me in an evening's quest of excitement, well—I'll have to accept your invitation to go with you, that's all!" Robert Bruce paused, grinning. "It's our first night together in years and years and we're going to have it together, willy-nilly!"

The artist lighted a cigarette. "I can't promise you any excitement, old glutton for trouble, but you'll see something unusual!"

"What is this temple of Osiris?"

"Why, it's a rebirth of the religion of Ancient Egypt!"

Robert's expression was suddenly quizzical. "Seriously? Here, in New York City——!"

Neil's eyes sparkled. "We have a genuine temple of Osiris, presided over by a direct lineal descendant of the old priesthood!"

The youthful globetrotter looked at the man beside him. He wondered just how to take his statement. It could hardly be true, yet——! "And this affair tonight——?"

"Is an Egyptian wedding in the circular room of the temple."

"Where is the temple, and what is it like?"

Neil countered with a question. "You've heard of Warren King?"

"Yes!" smiling, "a millionaire, many times so; a collector of art treasures; and a 'nut'."

"Right, but a little hard on him!" The artist's expression was rueful. "Anyway he's the one who endowed the temple and the temple itself is the old King home remodelled for the purpose."

"I suppose he spent a lot!"

"Over a million on the circular room alone!"

"Wow!" Robert gasped.

A taxi carried them to their destination, a corner brownstone on Madison Avenue, and he followed Neil Cavendish up the steps to the front entrance, waiting until the artist rang the bell.

"Who are concerned in the nuptials?" he asked. "A priest, and a temple maid?"

"The girl is the High Priestess, ward of the Magus, or High Priest—the Egyptian—and she's being married to—well, make a guess; a wild one!"

"Yourself?"

"Hardly! No such luck! The man is Warren King himself!"

Above the bell, and beside the door where the friends waited, was a brightly polished brass plate on which was engraved:

HYPERION HOUSE
Occidental Order of Osiris

The two men were ushered into the house by a turbanned Egyptian. The entranceway was small with tiled floor and marble walls. The outer door was solid oak, the door leading into the house steel, white enameled, with heavy bolts. Beyond was a long low-ceilinged passageway, lined with paintings and art treasures from the King collection. The lighting was indirect; the walls and ceiling somber in color. On the floor was magnificent velvet carpeting, deadening their footsteps. The stillness was oppressive.

At the end of the hall was revealed a tiny automatic elevator, and in an upstairs suite Robert saw more signs of life. They stood in one of two dressing rooms, lavishly fitted up for the purpose. The farther room was to be seen through the opened and half-opened doors of a connecting bath, sparkling white in its appointments; and he realized that women as well as men were members of the order and that the chamber beyond was for their use. He had a glimpse of a woman with coils of rich brown hair as a slim Egyptian girl—presumably a maid—entered the bath and closed the door nearest him. Then a touch at his elbow reminded him that he was more than a chance onlooker into the affairs of the Order of Osiris.

He turned to find a young Egyptian boy dressed in native costume. Carefully judging Bruce's dimensions, the boy went to one of a long line of wardrobes against the wall; then returned with a black cassock. A glance at Cavendish showed that gentleman already draped in priestly robes so Robert put it on. Next the victim was brought a pair of felt overshoes. Nothing was said; there was no opportunity for comment. Soon they were conducted to a bare semi-triangular room, all in deep red, where they were left, together with four males similarly garbed.

After a time there was a sharp metallic knock upon the door nearest Robert, and he stepped back. Through a peephole came a voice with studied enunciation.

"Who seeks admission to this temple of the Logos; this inner heart of the body of Mother Earth; none other than the terrestrial throne of the Indwelling Spirit of the Sphere, the Son of the Sun, the omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent Ray?"

A sallow-complexioned, hump-shouldered man spoke for the others.

"Six atoms of the Fire Mist, incarnate in dust, seeking release from the wheel of the ages!"

The door opened. They passed through. The passageway beyond was dark—black, as the door behind them closed. For a moment all stood in silence. It seemed as if a chill wind swept through and by them. Another door opened and they hurried on into a large chamber, the circular room of the temple itself.

An unconscious exclamation of delight escaped Robert Bruce. The room was crowded with black-gowned figures, moving noiselessly here and there. The soft light from cleverly hidden bulbs glistened upon reverent faces. Strains from an unseen organ, barely audible, covered the occasional whisper and rustle of garments.

The circular wall of the sanctuary was a continuous solid panel of inlaid work. Inset were little eggs of ivory, resting in golden chalices from which sprang, with all the cunning of metal workers of some bygone day, flames of ruddy copper. There were tiny silver replicas of the caduceus of Mercury. There were golden serpents, ivory skulls, copper roses, and a host of figures of hidden significance; all in priceless paneling.

The effects of the reflected light upon the wall, now revealed here, now covered there by the silently shifting worshippers, was weird. The glistening floor of marble, highly polished, somewhere between cream yellow and canary in color, joined in a strange game of bandying about reflections from the various metals in the wall's inlay. Robert understood the felt overshoes.

"The ceiling is the feature!"

The whisper was from Cavendish at his elbow. He looked up, then checked an ejaculation. The chamber was surmounted by a shallow dome painted to represent the northern hemisphere of the heavens, and the light was so shielded from it as to create an almost perfect illusion. The stars, proportional to actual size and brilliancy, twinkled calmly from their correct positions. Groups familiar to him from college days lazily awaited his inspection and approval. Nothing was missing. Then he smiled. It was clever work, but easy enough. The planets, which moved, he reflected, would have to be left out, and the moon—he paused. The moon was new and not to be found in the sky at this hour. He looked again to identify some of the constellations. There was Orion, unmistakable and the most beautiful figure of the firmament. To the

left—he must be facing nearly east—would be the Zodiac. Sure enough, he recognized Cancer; then started. Gleaming brilliantly, as if to mock him, was Jupiter, just in its proper place!

For a moment a reassuring thought held him: it was no ceiling at all, but the actual heavens. Then a quick glance showed him his mistake. The dome plainly joined the wall nearest him, and there was a slight distortion of its distant portion when observed carefully from where he stood. From the center of the room the effect would have been baffling. It was sheer artistry.

A noticeable stir presaged the arrival of the principals in the events of the evening. Attention was focused upon the door opposite that which had admitted the six late arrivals a few moments before. The room, entirely windowless, had three doors in all, and they were carefully orientated. The shrine was at the east and it was the door at the south which was to admit the high functionaries. Velvet hangings of deep maroon had been drawn before the entrances at the north and west. The strains of music ceased and the heavy oriental scent became almost stifling.

First to enter was the millionaire, Warren King; erect, conscious of his prestige among his fellow worshippers at the altar of the Osiris, and proud of the order which his wealth had endowed so magnificently. Following King walked a swarthy Egyptian, head down in apparent humility, each step revealing a tiger-like grace in his movements. Bruce felt Cavendish lean towards him. The whisper was cautiously faint.

"King; and Murtri, Magus of the order!"

Robert had eyes for the latter alone. He felt that there was an indescribable something radiating from Murtri—almost as if an invisible emanation from his person was seeking to enfold and fascinate these souls who sought their God at a shrine reclaimed from the dead civilizations of antiquity.

The door closed. The heavy curtain was drawn. King, reaching a point in front of the shrine, made obeisance. Then suddenly the music struck up with more life than before and there was a sudden swirling and rush of air, cool, and dissipating the reek of the East; giving evidence of a system of ventilation so cleverly hidden that there was not the slightest visible sign of it.

The approach of some friends for Cavendish gave Robert an opportunity to study the different groups. The changing of the air in the room sharpened his faculties, giving him keener impressions. Suddenly now he was aware that he was free from a subtle dread which had gripped him all evening; a foreshadowing of some cardinal event of his life—something destined to happen this night, in this house! Without apparent volition his eyes traveled to the door at the west. He started. There was a movement at the curtain and a small white hand appeared. He watched. Another moment and the curtains parted.

Into the room glided a slender, graceful girl, utterly unlike any Bruce had ever known. She paused and he was so situated that she was framed exactly by the square of velvet behind her. Her robes were white, in dazzling contrast to everything else in the room, save only the shrine. Her eyes were big and dark, and her hair of a Japanese blackness so black that it shone like polished jet. Her coloring was faint; indeed at first glance she seemed, in her Eastern robes, an Oriental. But another glance revealed full red lips, a perfect oval face, and long, slim lines of figure.

For several minutes she stood there; and the velvet gave her motionless form a cameo effect. Unmistakably the bride, she escaped observation by some miracle of unassuming maidenliness. Robert stared at her rudely, hoping and yet fearing she would meet the gaze he could not lower. She did not look his way; she seemed seeking rather to pick out her affianced from the group at the east. Finally she moved, breaking the spell; and he turned, conscious of a far different influence.

Murtri was approaching. The Egyptian, alert always, had seen the newcomer. Cavendish hastened to present him and Murtri smiled at the artist in approval.

"I wish all our new members were as zealous as you, frater Cavendish."

Robert turned away. Somehow the image of the girl kept coming up before him and he sought to locate her. He found himself trembling. She was at the side of King now, clinging to his arm. Murtri had just discovered her presence; was hurrying towards her. Her manner was almost timid, but her eyes were wide and there was a rapt expression in her face.

"That's the girl, the high priestess—the one in white!"

The voice seemed to come from a great distance. Robert controlled himself with difficulty. What's her name? What do they call her?"

"Eleanor!"

She was looking about the room now. King had drawn Murtri aside. Others had noticed her presence but paid little attention to her; it was the wedding ceremony that would claim their interest. Robert alone stared at her; could not take his gaze away.

Slowly her eyes moved—moved—until they met his! She gave a little start; her pupils dilated. Half a moment and she came straight for him. Her timid manner was gone, giving place to an imperiousness that was almost out of place. She touched his arm.

CHAPTER TWO.

"MY BELOVED IS MINE; AND I AM HIS!"

IT was almost incredible that Eleanor and Robert could leave the circular room together, yet Robert saw with surprise that hardly a person was interested in her movements enough to

glance at her as she parted the curtains and led him out.

"Miss—Miss Eleanor, I——"

"S-sh!"

The hand she put upon his mouth was small, cool, and possessed of a power to thrill. He noted, obediently following her again, that her step was fascinatingly light and her carriage such to be described by no less a word than queenly. Their route was down broad steps, into a large music room, and half a flight further to a wide landing. Here, in a little alcove between floors, she paused, listening. Then she pressed a hidden spring, suddenly, and a panel in the wall opened. Entering, she beckoned for him to follow. The aperature closed behind him automatically. At the other end of the secret passageway she touched another spring and led the way through into a handsome corridor, pausing once more to listen.

Again he was about to say something, but she checked him. Behind them was a conservatory revealing in a half circle of light a perfect wealth of tropical foliage. For a moment nothing was to be heard; then Robert became aware of the faint patter-patter of falling water in a fountain. Satisfied, Eleanor opened a door, quickly, and entered. He followed. She closed the door after him and locked it. Her fingers sought the switch and the room was flooded with light. Then she left him standing and hastened to a further room where, at her touch, a second rush of illumination revealed the suite in its entirety.

As the figure of Eleanor in her robes of pure white had stood out and apart from all those assembled above, so now this apartment contrasted equally with all the rest of the house so far as it had been viewed by Robert. There was none of the somberness, the heaviness, the sense of mass and power. Everything was cream, and white, and old rose. The furniture was maple, faultlessly matched; the walls white paneled with dainty scrollwork, surmounted by pink tinting which shaded imperceptibly into the white of the ceiling. The rugs were Persian, lacking a single clashing color to spoil the scheme of the suite. At the windows and between the rooms were hangings of shimmering silk. Upon the dressing table was nothing but purest ivory; and that in amazing profusion. The very darkest colors were to be found in a fluffy silk quilt of deep old rose on the bed, a traveling suit of queer Frenchy gray-yellow laid out upon a chair, and—everywhere—the deep green of stalk and stem and fern and leaf; for the rooms were lined, banked, with flowers: roses, chrysanthemums, carnations—all white, the choicest products of metropolitan greenhouses.

There, between the rooms, with the light glistening upon her ebon hair and her eyes large, black as sable, deep as a primeval abyss, stood Eleanor! She came to Robert slowly. Her arms, with their enfolding draperies slipping from them, stole around his neck. Timidly she drew herself close. Proudly she raised her face to his, her eyes soft and half closed, her lips parted——! He kissed her.

Had he fallen under the spell of Osiris? Was there potency in this ancient faith? Suddenly he remembered King; realized he was a man of honor. He pushed her away, disregarding the hurt in her eyes.

"This—this will never do! Never!"

"My love——!"

"You have promised to marry Warren King! He——!"

"No, no, beloved! It is a terrible mistake!"

She clung to him, trembling. He gathered his scattered thoughts, realizing moment by moment the precariousness of the situation.

"Listen, Eleanor! Upstairs they are waiting. You can't change around like this. You can't love me all in a moment! It's a passing fancy—a momentary delusion——! You——!"

She interrupted him, covering her ears and looking up at him with mute pleading in big, wide, fear-distended eyes. "Let your conscience be at ease. My marriage was arranged by Murtri, and I had faith in him and believed it was to be so, that it should be so. The word of Murtri is law to me because he is my accepted Guru—my teacher. In all the cosmos his wish is only below that of my invisible Master Himself. You people who have not studied Egyptian philosophy do not understand these things."

Robert glanced towards the door nervously.

She saw and smiled. "You have nothing to fear. No one in this temple dares question the movements of the wearer of the robes of Isis!" She indicated her garments.

He looked his surprise. "I thought they were for your wedding."

"Upon my wedding I shall have to change to black indeed"—she smiled wistfully and looked up at him—"I shall have to change now because I have yielded my lips to you; because I have even spoken to you." She hesitated rather shyly. "You have had my very first kiss, and you have had a privilege accorded few men in history, for I wear the white robes and would never have dared, would have faced death first, had I not been told to—to surrender myself to you—mind, soul and—body."

Bruce felt his world turning upside-down. What sort of a maid was this? His mind was in a turmoil.

Her arm stole about his neck again. "When first I saw you, love, I beheld us both in a vision, and I was nestled in your arms even as I am now. I saw also the face of my Master; not Murtri, but the exalted invisible being whose face I have seen twice before, and He was smiling. I heard His voice. 'This is he for whom you have prayed. Go, take him, and give yourself to him utterly!' There can be no mistake when He speaks."

"Eleanor—Eleanor—don't tempt me! They have inflamed your imagination, and I cannot

wreck your happiness and drag your name into the press and—Lord knows what not!"

Suddenly she released him, averting her gaze. She was trembling. "You are blinded—blinded. Go!" She unlocked the door and opened it.

He left, afraid he would be seen, stopped, questioned. He glanced up and down the hall. There was no one in sight, yet a vague fear held him motionless. He was not so sure that the actions of Eleanor would require no explanation, that the rites of Osiris were anything more than mummery, pure and simple.

All at once he started. Something brushed his elbow, and he turned with a feeling that some one was passing him. Nobody was to be seen. Yet, as if it were some strange sort of mental picture, he had a fleeting glimpse of a face with deep-set, staring eyes, prominent, narrow nose, firm mouth, low forehead; and a mass of snow-white hair and beard which framed the features and gave them a look of impressive austerity.

It was only a flash, a bit of illusion. He decided the whole thing was a figment of his imagination, induced by contact with the girl's mystic fancies.

But should he return? He tried in vain to find the panel leading to the secret passageway. Then he noticed stairs leading up through a door next to the conservatory. He ran up these and found himself in another hallway, from which several others branched. No one of them seemed to lead anywhere.

"Will the sahib come, please!"

Robert's heart jumped and he turned. It was a very old man with full beard and long hair, who started off, leaving him to follow. Was he to be questioned? What account could he make of his actions? Something familiar in the face of the old servant disturbed him also. Half-way down the hall the old man paused and pressed a spring, releasing a sliding panel and revealing another secret passage. A flight of steps took them up; a masked door admitted them to a small darkened chamber. Here, at an entranceway, the guide stood aside.

"Will the sahib enter, please!"

As before the request was a command. At that instant Robert recognized the haunting resemblance in the face of the old servant. It was very nearly the face he had seen outside Eleanor's door. And he felt, somehow, that she had sent the man to guide him.

He went through the door, found the curtains hung at the other side, parted them—and was in the circular room again, at the south!

CHAPTER THREE.

ROBES OF BLACK.

NEIL CAVENDISH had been a member of the Occidental Order of Osiris for months; had attended a dozen regular ritualistic meetings in the circular room. The slim figure of the High Priestess in her snowy white garments, with her strikingly black hair and eyes, had fascinated him from the moment of his initiation. But he had learned that she was unapproachable. Even talk to her was prohibited—so he was told.

Yet Robert Bruce, a stranger, had only caught her glance to bring her hastening to his side. She had carried him off, unquestioned. The door at the west closed upon the two figures, and the minutes became fives, and the fives quarter-hours. Every one waited most impatiently for the wedding ceremony to begin.

When Bruce appeared at the south door he turned to him with unconcealed eagerness. "Where did she take you, Bob. What did she want? What happened? What's up?"

"Nothing." Robert, to the artist, seemed dazed, shaken.

At that moment there was a murmur. The curtains at the west parted again, and Eleanor re-entered. Then there was a general gasp of astonishment. Eleanor was dressed as any of the others, in black.

She approached Murtri and stopped, facing him. There was blind, unreasoning fury in the face of the Egyptian as he indicated her garments, questioning her. She refused an explanation. Her eyes flashed and she went to King, taking his arm. Together they went before the shrine. The guests clustered about to witness the ceremony.

Robert, dazed, watched the ancient rites in silence. Eleanor made no sign, but stood, erect, proud, exhibiting a new mature beauty. As she was delivered over to King, Robert clutched the artist and there was a strange weird cry of agony.

"Eleanor!"

The next moment he would have fallen, but Cavendish managed to support him. The conformation of the circular room and its echoes made it impossible to determine the direction from which the cry had come. Eleanor herself, at the sound of her name, collapsed.

The artist took advantage of the confusion. Half supporting, half dragging his sagging companion, he got him out of the room through the door at the north, luckily not far from where they stood.

In the dressing-room, perhaps thirty minutes later, Murtri questioned the men, endeavoring to learn who had cried out.

Robert kept his composure. Cavendish was silent. None of the others knew.

The Egyptian turned away. His face was black. "No one shall forget the respect owed to the rites of Osiris!" he muttered.

At the door he stopped. Into his features came the rapt expression of the Eastern fanatic. From the girdle of his robes of office he drew a thin, sharp, glittering dagger. Raising it overhead, he fixed his eyes upon it.

"The tongue of Osiris is sharp; the tongue of Osiris shall speak!"

CHAPTER FOUR.

AN AMERICAN MONA LISA.

THE studio of Neil Cavendish, on Fourteenth street near the Sixth avenue "L" station, unlike the myriad so-called studio-apartments built for professional Bohemians, faddists and smart middle-class folk, was a genuine workshop. He tidied the room with particular care, for he expected none other than Warren King and his bride, the first visit of the millionaire and an unexpected surprise.

Near the door a girl stood watching him. She was dressed in a simple, well-tailored blue serge suit, with golden-brown hair peeping out from beneath a tam-o'-shanter.

"He's getting back before he starts, almost!" He threw a broom into the corner. "Who? King?"

"Yes. This is Monday morning early. He was married late Friday night, and you greeted me at the door with the glad tidings that you didn't need me but expected him every moment with his wife, and that you were going to do her portrait. So it's a short honeymoon, isn't it?"

"I guess you're right, Marjorie, but why the sudden interest in the movements of Warren King?"

She laughed. At least her eyes did. She puckered her mouth and simulated an injured expression very well. "See here, Neil Cavendish, you must cultivate a memory. I know you're supposed to say nothing about your Order of Osiris to non-prospective members, but you tell me more things than you think, old dear." She went over to him and playfully took a bit of his coat sleeve between a very dainty forefinger and thumb. "I think you're a little jealous, I do."

"Oh, no!" He walked away and began to whistle softly.

"The trouble, Neil"—she raised her voice—"is that you haven't movements enough to interest a red-blooded human like I am."

He stopped whistling, startled. "Huh! What th' devil do you mean by that speech?"

"Nothing. But you get up, have breakfast, paint me for one magazine, eat, send me home, go to bed, get up, wait for me, paint me for another magazine, and so on. If you'd take me somewhere once in a while I wouldn't have so much time for thinking, and then I wouldn't have a 'sudden interest in Warren King'."

He looked at her. Always she kept him guessing. The only time he had offered to take her out she had declined so positively he had never dared repeat the experiment.

"All right," he replied finally. "We'll have a party, *tout de suite!*"

She laughed, flicked him a kiss that meant nothing and danced out.

Soon a knock proclaimed his visitors. The millionaire was cordial, affable. The artist felt, however, that his good humor was assumed, was a cloak for an agitation underneath.

"You must have a fine press agent, Cavendish," King remarked, "or else your work is mighty good."

"How is that?"

"Why, at least three members of the order have urged me to have you do Mrs. King, as long as three and four months ago; and a Fifth avenue art dealer, also a member, is enthusiastic about your work."

"That is Brennan of Brennan's Galleries. He's the one that proposed me for membership in the order."

"Yes. And he intimated if I coaxed you a lot I might get you to show me a certain picture; said you had a 'regular American Mona Lisa'."

Cavendish laughed without replying to the last. He turned, instead, to Eleanor.

"Have you any particular conception of your own portrait, Mrs. King, or are you willing to leave everything to me?"

King, uninterested in the arranging of Eleanor's portrait, wandered over to a corner of the studio where one window penetrated the wall. Here, behind a screen, was a bureau and an old-fashioned wardrobe. The artist's bed, a couch in the day time, was along the wall in front of the screen. Hung near the window, so the light would strike it, and placed at an angle to be visible from the bed, was a covered canvas.

The cloth, flung over the frame carelessly, left enough of the picture visible to attraction his attention. One glance caused him to stand rigid, horror-stricken. He drew the covering aside. It was the portrait of a woman, undoubtedly the painter's masterpiece. She was young, but there was something age-old in her face—a fascinating sense of evil; a lure, not sensual, but rather a demand for retribution, a cry for vengeance. It was a face to inspire dread. There was beauty, but it was overshadowed by hate.

"Good God! God!" With hands shaking, voice trembling, King called the artist over.

"Who is that? I know that woman. Where is she?"

Cavendish, angry that the millionaire should have uncovered the canvas, yet was puzzled. "It's—it's my conception, not an actual portrait at all."

The millionaire collected his faculties slowly. "It seems inconceivable, but your picture is so striking a resemblance to a woman I once knew—in fact, to the first Mrs. King. It is not generally known I was married before, but—it was twenty years ago, and she died before the first year was over." His voice broke. "Is it painted for some particular purpose?"

"No-o." The answer showed indecision.

"How did you happen to do it?"

Neil Cavendish considered. "I had been having trouble with models for my covers. Some one recommended a girl, Kitty somebody-or-other, who hung around Washington Square, and told me I'd probably find her at Alice Allen's Attic. I went down. It's a funny little place, with low ceiling and oil lamps, where you get coffee and home-made chocolate cake. Kitty wasn't there, and I sat down to wait. In a corner was a girl I knew as a model, the one I use all the time now—Marjorie Gates. She was playing solitaire, and the lamp—light like that on a table has a trick of softening a face, you know—brought out some elements in her features I had never noticed before. In fact, I had refused to use her previously. This time, however, I decided that she would do for what I wanted. So I went over.

"'Good-evening,' I said.

"She didn't even look up. 'Good-evening.'

"'I want you to sit for me. You remember me, Neil Cavendish?'

"'Yep!' She laid down another series of cards before she put her elbows on the table, rested her head in her hands, and looked me square in the eye. 'I remember you because you are the one artist to say I'm not worth painting. I presume your visit means that the several hundred other professional models are engaged, or sick. Am I right?'"

King laughed, interrupting. "Rather vindictive, wasn't it?"

The artist's expression was a study. "Vindictive? She's the most vindictive little animal I have ever met. Yet I had to grin, for she had repaid me fair enough. She smiled too a bit, then, says she:

"'You see something in me to-night and want to paint it. Well, I'll pose for you on one condition.'

"'Which is what?'

"'That you just paint. I'll do the posing and the arranging of myself—my clothes, my hair and—old grouch—my expression!'

The painter looked up. "There you have the beginning of my lady, Mr. King. Certainly it is not a portrait of my model. My magazine covers demonstrate that."

For just a moment the millionaire hesitated. Then he turned to Cavendish. "May I see it again? I might want to make you an offer."

The artist pulled the cloth away. "If you wish you may see Brennan about it, but I really do not want to part with it—yet."

King was visibly affected again by the picture. "I would like to meet your model. Would you bring her up to dinner some evening?"

Cavendish remembered Marjorie's new and sudden desire to be taken out. "She would be delighted, I know."

The millionaire assisted his bride with her wraps, and they walked to the door. There, as if it were an afterthought, he stopped.

"Perhaps you could arrange to bring your friend, Mr. Bruce, also." He paused. "I have not met him, and—Murtri is particularly anxious to meet him again."

Cavendish glanced at Eleanor. She had turned, was half-way into the hall.

CHAPTER FIVE.

"EXACTLY A WEEK FROM TO-NIGHT."

COVERS were laid for fourteen in the King banquet hall. The millionaire had acquired the painting, and this was the evening on which it was to be shown to the small select circle. After a dinner of many courses, served with all the skill of a Burmese chef, there would be a formal unveiling.

Cavendish, Robert and Marjorie were the last of the guests to arrive. Entrance to the house this time was from the side street, on the ground floor, and the diners were assembled in a small lounging-room or den off the large reception hall.

Robert glanced about nervously for the first glimpse of the woman he loved, but she was not in sight. King himself greeted them and found the first opportunity to turn to Marjorie. Robert, in spite of his own ill-concealed agitation, noticed a strange eagerness in the millionaire's manner.

"I have wanted to meet you, Miss Gates, because——"

"And I have wanted to meet you," she interrupted. "We—we will have a splendid time looking at all your pictures, and I have heard so much about your collection too."

"Yes, and I want to——"

"Another thing," she hastened to interrupt again. "I hope to see some of your wonderful house. Can you show it to me a little later?"

"Why"—pausing, puzzled—"yes."

She moved away, and Robert's attention was attracted by the throwing open of the sliding doors to the banquet hall.

In the remodeling operations a part of the first story had been sacrificed to give this ceiling a height of twenty or twenty-five feet; the place, in fact, was King's private picture gallery. Valuable paintings in tier upon tier, five in all, lined the walls. Each frame was illuminated by its own tiny reflector. The woodwork of the room was oak, the ceiling paneled; and, principally responsible for the effectiveness of the scene, the lighting save for the pictures was furnished entirely by candles—wax mission-style tapers of deep maroon, the color of the order.

Robert's place at the table was toward the end near the den, the last seat on his side to the right. The wall behind him was solid, also those at both ends. Directly across was the door to the reception rooms. In the corner, diagonally to his left, were, in the same wall, swinging doors to the

pantries. There were no windows or other entrances.

The new painting, covered with heavy material of some sort, was hung in the center of the third tier, directly above the head of King, on the wall behind him. His seat was at the end of the table away from Robert. The other end place was vacant; also one immediately at the left and one near the right of the millionaire. Cavendish was opposite Bruce.

King, proud of his home, addressed his guests. "If you have found your places we will be seated and the priestess can join us." Then he turned to Marjorie and to Bruce, since they were not members of the order: "If these formalities seem strange to you it is because they are from remotest antiquity. They are our heritage and we must conform to them. The High Priestess may never remove her robes of office nor associate with others on terms of usual human companionship. She can only come to the table after we are seated. Mrs. King," he added, "has remained to escort her here."

Immediately at Robert's left sat an effervescent little lady in a modified evening gown—too young presumably for full décolleté. Next to her was a red-faced and somewhat flabby-looking man, with wide tortoise-shell glasses. He addresed her suddenly.

"Who arranged the places at table, Gene?"

She giggled. "I did." Then, in the cause of truthfulness she added: "Mr. King, though, told me to put Mr. Bruce beside Eleanor, and that Lillian would have to be beside him."

Robert caught the man's gaze, and there was a peculiar thoughtfulness in it. All at once it flashed over him. Why should King put him next to Eleanor? His sense of discomfort became acute.

A lull in the conversation announced the arrival of the others. First to enter was Murtri, who wore the robes of the Magus. He stepped aside. His manner was very subdued, but there was a veiled display of fire in his eyes as he flashed a momentary glance towards the table.

The new High Priestess was singularly beautiful in her garments. Her hair was yellow, almost white; her eyes brightest sea blue. It was as though the Occidental Order of Osiris, having been served at its shrine by the raven beauty of Eleanor, had sought out and found a perfect blonde. Eleanor, in an evening gown of soft gray, entered last.

Robert watched Eleanor, spellbound, but she did not meet his gaze. With perfect self-possession, she gave directions for the service, then smiled upon her guests. With a vague feeling of being watched, Robert turned to catch King's gaze. He dropped his eyes again, hastily, conscious of an unpleasant chill creeping up his back.

"Isn't sister pretty, Mr. Bruce?" Gene, at his left, was speaking.

He gathered his scattered wits. "Is she your sister?"

"Yes. And I'm awfully glad they took Lillian because she's just the dreamy sort of a person old Murtri can do things with." She paused to bite an olive. "Mamma and I are awfully proud of her. I put mamma right across from her, and between Mr. King and Murtri, and she'll be so happy she won't eat a thing." Gene, however, took care to punctuate her remarks always with whatever was available upon the board before her.

"Who and what are the others here?" Robert, afraid to trust himself in any attempt at conversation with Eleanor, realized he had a source of information here—an aid in keeping his composure. "You see," he explained, "I was introduced to them all at once and can't remember a name."

"Well"—Gene paused; there was a necessary gulp. "Right across from you is your friend, Neil Cavendish, who painted the picture and is going to paint Eleanor. Eleanor's got on the dress she's going to be painted in—it was just finished this afternoon—and he's so tickled he'd be falling in love with her if he wasn't in love with Miss Gates." Two spoonfuls of soup were the interruption here. "Miss Gates——" She sobered suddenly. "Oh, look! Daddy King looks as if he's seeing a ghost!"

Warren King was looking at Marjorie. The lines in his face were hard, worn, and there was a touch of fear in his expression. He was oblivious of the others. She seemed to be aware of his gaze, but pretended to ignore it.

"He's looking at the ring on her finger!" The voice beside Robert was tense with all a schoolgirl's appreciation of the dramatic.

It was a tawdry cheap little band on Marjorie's little finger; brass that hadn't the decency to disguise itself, that flaunted two tiny blue flowers which, had they not been of plated tin, would have faded away all of a score of years before.

Suddenly now, as if aware of the gaze, Marjorie turned. For a moment her hands were under the table; then, as she toyed with a bit of mushroom, the finger was revealed bare—the ring was gone! Robert looked about. No one else, apparently, had witnessed the little drama.

King regained his self-control. He turned to other things. It was a good time between courses for the unveiling.

In the midst of the confusion attending the uncovering the study of the work, the exchange of criticisms, all favorable, the going to different parts of the room for the effects of various angles, Robert felt a touch at his elbow. He turned. It was Eleanor!

"S-sh! I must see you." She looked about, then: "I'll send a message to your club, and—and you must come." A moment later she was in another part of the room.

When all were seated again Cavendish observed: "You wouldn't think that Miss Gates was my model—now would you?"

Marjorie laughed. "It's largely the expression." She caught King's eye. "See." She assumed the expression of the picture.

King grasped the sides of his chair. An eager little hand pinched Robert. "She's doing that to get Daddy King's goat."

Brennan, the art dealer, looked from Marjorie to the picture and back, comparing them. He turned to King.

"It's the hair that's different principally." He faced the artist. "Why did you make her hair dark, Neil?"

Marjorie spoke up. There were little flaming spots of color in her cheeks from excitement. "That's its real color! But he wants to make blonde girls on his magazine covers all the time, and I used peroxide and ammonia and made it brown to please the beast, and so—behold the beauty!"

Every one laughed except King.

A ghastly expression crept across his face. "Miss Gates?"

"Yes." She turned around, her expression quite guileless.

"I bought this picture largely because it reminded me of a woman I knew out West—in Southern Illinois. If your hair is naturally dark——"

"Oh, I'm awfully sorry, Mr. King. I haven't ever been outside of New York and New Jersey. Mother and father both came over here from England when I was a babe in arms; they both died when I was a kiddie——" There was a catch in her voice. "I remember dad saying we hadn't a relative on this side, and—I'm awfully sorry, Mr. King."

He looked at her, baffled. He seemed about to ask her something, perhaps about the ring, but checked himself.

The conversation became desultory. To Robert the time seemed interminable. Not until the coffee had been on the table perhaps for a quarter of an hour did anything happen of general interest.

Marjorie was seated next to Brennan on the other side of the table. The two were engaged in some sort of friendly argument. Suddenly Brennan leaned in the direction of King.

"Here's a candidate for a future High Priestess, if you can get her to join the order."

The millionaire was interested. "How do you mean?"

"Well, we've been talking about predictions of future events, and she claims that she can do so by means of a sympathetic circle; that it is a faculty that any one can cultivate."

Murtri straightened suddenly. His face showed doubt. "Would Miss Gates care to demonstrate her faculty—here, now?"

"Certainly if—if Mr. King wishes."

He nodded. At her direction a circle was formed by joining hands under the table. Each person was told to bow his head. A strict silence was enjoined. Finally Marjorie began to tremble and the tremor communicated itself around the circle. The atmosphere became surcharged with suspense.

Suddenly there was a cry and Marjorie flung herself backwards from the circle, breaking it. Her chair crashed to the floor. She caught herself and dropped to her knees in her place, burying her head in her arms.

The voice of Murtri, cold, sharp, broke the stillness. "If the prophetess"—his tone was a sneer—"if the prophetess," he repeated, "will make her prediction!"

Marjorie raised her eyes. There were tears in them, and her face was wet. It—it is t-terrible! Forgive me, people, but I'm giving it just as I got it. One of us in this room now"—and for a moment her voice broke—"will, exactly a week from to-night, and at about this same hour, be"—again the break—"be killed by some other one of us now in this room!"

CHAPTER SIX.

"IT'S TRUE! IT'S TRUE!"

ROBERT, after the first moment of surprised incredulity, glanced at Eleanor. Marjorie was pallid, trembling. Warren King broke the spell.

"This is a terrible prospect. I—I trust Miss Gates is mistaken; I sincerely hope so." His hands were wet with perspiration.

Murtri leaned on the table. "You should be able, Miss Gates, to give an idea of the identity of the slayer, and of the victim." He stared at her steadily, intently, as if to force her to raise her eyes to his.

She shook her head. "If that were revealed, it could be prevented, and it would be no prophecy!" Her voice was low.

Through all of this the new High Priestess had sat silent with eyes closed. Now all at once the blood receded from her face, and she clenched and unclenched her hands. Her eyes opened; were dilated and expressionless. For a moment she was rigid, drawn tense as a bow-string in the hands of an archer. Then she gasped, relaxed, and with the sudden rushing return of blood and the regaining of her faculties left her place at the table, ran for all the world like a frightened little animal behind King to her mother, and, on her knees, clinging to her, cried:

"It's true! It's true! I saw a man, all curled up in a heap, dead. It's going to happen."

Murtri settled back in his chair, brows drawn together. "The High Priestess has spoken!" he muttered. There was finality in his tone.

King, wetting his lips, rose to the occasion. "I still think there is a chance to defeat the prophecy. A week from to-night I invite you all to dinner again, here." He smiled, but the smile was forced. "If one of us is to be the victim, another the culprit, there will be twelve others of us on hand to take part in stopping an actual —an actual murder!"

CHAPTER SEVEN.

"TAKE ME TO MY BELOVED."

FOR two, three days Robert cursed himself as a fool for allowing anything to stand before Eleanor's happiness. The fourth brought her message to the club, in the person of her maid, summoning him.

It seemed as if he was destined never to enter Hyperion House twice in the same fashion. The little Egyptian girl led the way down into the basement areaway, admitting them with a passkey. Inside she steered a devious course, up two flights of narrow back stairs to a jog off the library. Here they both stopped. Some one was approaching. She drew him behind some curtains.

King entered, followed by Murtri, who was remonstrating, pleading. King spoke suddenly, irritably. "You can talk all day, Murtri, but I tell you I'm just about at the end of my patience."

"But listen, brother. I am only a servant of the invisible powers. They have promised that Eleanor shall be yours, that you together shall found the New Egypt, here in America."

"Promised, bah! I built the temple, endowed the order, and—what? She is no more my wife than if there had never been a ceremony."

The man and the girl behind the curtain heard King stalk off. Murtri remained behind muttering. His voice was barely audible.

"The tongue of Osiris is sharp; the tongue of Osiris shall speak."

A moment later he left also. The girl stole across the room, followed by Robert, and pressed a spring releasing a secret panel in the opposite corner. Was this house a maze of hidden passageways? Inside narrow cramped steps led up and down. They ascended to the servants' quarters, and Robert recognized the corridor, where he had been lost his first time in the house, and the room in which she shoved him, her own.

"Wait," she whispered. "Vasha will see if all is clear."

Almost at once she returned and led the way down—it was familiar now—to Mrs. King's rooms. Opening the door she stood aside to watch. He entered and heard the voice of Eleanor. "My love—here——"

She lay, her face wan and drawn, in a wealth of silk, reclining upon a mountain of tiny pillows worthy of a princess, smiling as he came to her. He sat on the edge of the bed, wondering at her lack of color.

"Lift me," she directed weakly. "I am helpless."

He put an arm under her, raised her to a sitting position. Her wrists had been twisted cruelly. He looked his question, a slowly mounting rage depriving him of the power of speech.

"Murtri," she said. "Take me away, my beloved."

He laid her back gently, but trembled as he straightened up beside the bed. "I shall get ready at once."

Her expression became radiant. She nestled to him the best she could, happy. All too soon Vasha came to smuggle him out of the house again.

CHAPTER EIGHT.

THE PROPHECY FULFILLED.

WHEN the little company assembled the second week in Warren King's banquet hall there was no light other than the wax tapers; myriads of tiny flames upheld by candelabra of silver and wrought iron, by golden candle-sticks, and by stands and holders showing the workmanship of ancient Rome and Egypt. In Hyperion House there were, altogether, two windowless rooms—the circular adytum and the picture gallery. Each seemed to hold within its walls the spell of the weird. In the long hall downstairs, with its tiers of darkened paintings and its high ceiling now barely to be distinguished, the little lights flickered in the draughts of the hidden ventilating system, and it almost seemed—to the people sitting there awed as the evening wore on —that the room was breathing, as if it were a living thing which held them in a throbbing, menacing embrace.

Robert found the passing of the minutes a slow torture. He knew Eleanor suffered no less acutely. Not until this day had he succeeded in turning a sufficient portion of his inheritance into ready cash, but now only an excuse to leave the house was needed. Eleanor had whispered that Vasha was upstairs, taking advantage of the dinner to pack her things. There was little chance for interruption, because King, in the afternoon, had discharged every Oriental servant in the house. Gene had so informed Robert when he noticed the dinner being served by colored waiters from a caterer. Only the old butler was left—and Vasha.

Little Gene, alone of those at the table, seemed to enjoy the situation.

Neil had fallen to sketching something in a tiny note-book. Next on his left Mrs. Brennan,

wife of the art dealer, was twirling her fingers nervously and watching him. Robert's glance traveled on down the table. Newland—a little white-haired man and a noted chemist—was moulding the top of a lighted candle. Marjorie, next, had a handkerchief to her face. Her cheeks were burning hot, her eyes downcast. Brennan, frowning, was doing mathematics on the table linen with a stubby pencil, mind ever on his business. Last on the side, the High Priestess, Lillian, was asleep, nodding in her chair.

King, at his end of the table, was leaning back, watching the wax drip from the top of a huge candelabrum near him. His expression was black. On Robert's side of the table, nearest King, was Mrs. Carter, mother of Gene and Lillian. Tightly grasped with two hands was a glass half full of water, at which she was staring intently. This puzzled Robert. He learned, many months afterward, that she was endeavoring to develop clairvoyance.

Murtri was muttering sentences to himself, eyes fixed straight ahead. Eileen Brennan, sitting next to the red-faced man with the big glasses, and that gentleman himself, were playing tit-tat-toe with a preoccupation the game should never command, making the marks on the tablecloth with a coffee spoon and a fork. From his little neighbor Robert had learned the man's identity. He was Granger Howells, a famous detective.

Gene was watching Robert, and she smiled as their eyes met. Lastly he looked at Eleanor. Between Mrs. King and himself was the understanding that no one could destroy.

Something had to break the spell. Somebody's endurance had to come to an end. It was Marjorie who broke down and became hysterical. Cavendish was at her side in a moment. With a sudden cry she fainted in his arms.

Howells helped carry her to a little couch in the den, off the banquet hall, and though she regained consciousness at once, Cavendish urged her to lie there until sure her nerves were quiet.

Back at the table Howells turned to Eileen, beside him. "If we adjourn to the music room will you sing for us?"

Robert, wishing to further any idea which would take them away from the table and would give Eleanor and himself an opportunity to escape, leaned forward intending to urge the girl to do so. He was interrupted by Gene, who pulled him back.

"Just a minute, please." There was a peculiar entreaty in her voice.

He glanced at her. She was looking through the door into the den and he had hindered her view. He followed the direction of her gaze, but saw nothing. Part of the couch on which Marjorie lay was visible, and he could see the lower part of her body, covered by a rug.

Gene touched his arm again. "All right now."

"What was it?" He was puzzled.

She equivocated. "Oh, nothing!"

At that moment the old butler entered, catching the attention of every one as he went to King and handed him a note. The millionaire read it, seemed startled—frightened. Finally he tore it into very small pieces, dropping them in a dish of shells and bits of nuts. For a moment he hesitated; then he rose and walked out without a word or sign to any one. Robert glanced at Eleanor. She had watched King leave and was looking at the door, puzzled. After just a moment she rose and hurried out after him.

Robert settled forward in his chair, ill at ease, and with a vague sense of premonition. A minute—two—three, passed. Another moment and there was a shot upstairs. In the silence it was terrifyingly loud.

He was the first to act. Almost simultaneously with the shot he jumped up. He ran through the den into the reception hall and leaped up the stairs three at a time, up the landing below the music room. By some miracle of inspiration he put his fingers on the spring of the secret panel and swung up the narrow passageway, drawing a revolver he had purchased just that afternoon. He covered the familiar route with great swift strides, and without hesitation plunged through the hidden door at the other end into Eleanor's corridor. A moment later he stopped in the open entrance to her room, alert and ready for any eventuality.

Eleanor lay on the floor, unconscious, a terrified look frozen on her face. Over her bent Vasha, straining to lift her. Black rage mounted into the soul of Robert Bruce. He looked about for King, but there was no one else in the room. Signs of Vasha's packing were about. The windows were open. He lifted Eleanor to the bed and found she was breathing naturally. He picked up a revolver from the floor, but the maid pointed to the ceiling, where the shot had embedded itself. He flung the weapon down and with murder in his heart stalked out of the room.

Instinctively turning into the conservatory, he ran up the steps into the music room and again stopped, but heard nothing. His next move was a problem. Somehow—he couldn't explain it—he expected to find King above in the circular room.

He started across the floor, footsteps deadened by the heavy carpet, but hesitated, hearing voices. Howells's drawl he recognized. He darted to some curtains, dodging behind them just in time to escape observation. Here was a small staircase leading to the upper floors also. He bounded up, without waiting for second thought, revolver still in hand. He found himself in the dressing-room which had been his real introduction to Hyperion House nearly three weeks before. Smiling grimly—for he would go to the circular room from here—he hurried to the door

which led towards the little red ante-room. It was locked. With an exclamation, he swung his entire weight against it, but it held.

Baffled, he gazed about. Of course! There would be a way from the woman's dressing-room also. He swung through the little bath and opened the corresponding door in the farther room. Elated, grim and determined, he found the big door that guarded the rites of Osiris and grasped the knob carefully, turning it with as little noise as possible. Then he swore. It was locked!

He saw the peep-hole and pulled back the metal slide with a vigorous gesture, resulting in a sharp, metallic click as the disc struck its top. He looked through.

Inside, in the middle of the marble floor, the center of a blaze of light, was King. He stood erect and possessed of a sinister alertness. In his hand, with arm extended, was a revolver. He heard the noise at the door, and with hardly a second's pause swung around, leveling the revolver, firing point-blank at the main panel. Robert ducked instinctively. The shot penetrated the wood just above his head and, spent, bounded from the wall behind him.

Enraged, Bruce waited for nothing. He raised his own revolver and was about to aim through the hole hurriedly when he was set upon from behind. He felt fingers of steel at his throat. He found himself bent back, back, without mercy. Desperately he sought to turn, to see his assailant. He tried to use his revolver, but as he pulled the trigger his arm was locked and the shot went wild. Things were going black. He made a last despairing effort and caught a glimpse of his opponent. It was Murtri. He thought he heard voices, then consciousness left him.

A confused buzzing, a rush of blood, signified his return to his senses.

"He's all right. He's coming around."

Dazed, he looked up into the face of Neil Cavendish. He smiled. Then he remembered and sobered. With the aid of his friend he struggled to his feet and looked around. Howells, Brennan and Murtri were standing at the big door, excited. Howells spoke.

"We'll have to break through."

Murtri and Brennan assented. Cavendish rushed to help, and the four men succeeded by bending their weight against the solid oak in sheer desperation. Robert wondered why nothing was said of Murtri's attempt to throttle him, but there was no time for reflection. He followed the others in, and then stood rooted to the spot.

There, in one end of the magnificent temple chamber, scattered, broken, flung to the four points of the compass, was the shrine of Osiris. In the middle of the matchless marble floor, in a pitiful slumped heap, was Warren King—dead!

CHAPTER NINE.

THE MEDICAL EXAMINER REPORTS.

LIEUTENANT FITZGERALD of the New York City police force arrived almost immediately. The location of the houses on a corner, pocketed by commercial buildings, and the fact that the patrolman heard the first shot, made it possible for the police to be absolutely sure it was an "inside job." All in the house were assembled in the music room. Near the window were nearly a dozen frightened guests. Eleanor, in a chair by herself, was attended by Vasha. The old butler sat on the edge of the piano stool, plainly frightened. Gene alone was occupied, fussing some bits of paper on top of the grand piano.

Fitzgerald at once recognized Granger Howells, the detective.

"Hello! You here on this? Do I resign, as usual?"

Howells smiled. "No, Fitz. This is a surprise to me, so go to it. I'm here following up another matter. I've no idea who killed him."

The lieutenant began his investigation with the butler.

"What is your name?"

"Louis Whitehead, sir."

"How long have you been here?"

"Three months, sir."

"What do you know about this shooting?"

"Nothing, sir. I—I was downstairs all the time, sir."

Howells interrupted. "That's correct, I think. I saw him when I ran up after the first shot. He was down there when you came in."

"Where are all the other servants?"

"Mr. King, sir, discharged them all this afternoon."

"What?"

"Yes, sir. It was quite unexpected, sir."

"Begging your pardon, sir, he had a quarrel with Mr. Murtri"—the old man paused to glance at the Egyptian fearfully—"he said, sir, that he was afraid if there were 'too many tongues of Osiris about they might get to wagging'—those were his words, sir."

The lieutenant turned to Howells. "What do you make of that?"

"Mr. Murtri"—smiling—"sometimes refers to a dagger as the 'tongue of Osiris.' I believe it's an old Egyptian expression."

Fitzgerald raised his voice. "Who is Mr. Murtri?"

"I am."

"What have you to say?"

"Nothing. I was at the table. I ran up with the others."

"You had a quarrel with the deceased?"

"Mr. King sometimes had an unruly temper, but words between us were never of any account. His affairs have been in my hands continuously

for nearly two years; by his will I am trustee of the estate, which goes to the order of which I am leader. Does that indicate trouble between us?"

"What was the cause of the quarrel to-day?"

"He saw fit to hold me accountable for his domestic troubles——"

"You are and you know it!" Eleanor arose, eyes flaming.

Howells put a hand on Fitzgerald's shoulder. "Perhaps I'd better explain the events leading up to this; then it'll be easier for you."

The lieutenant brightened. An interruption was the arrival of the medical examiner. Fitzgerald sent him upstairs with the sergeant.

"You say, Mr. Howells, that Mrs. King was the first to leave the room after the deceased went out?"

"Immediately afterwards."

"Mrs. King, please!"

"Yes." She came up, walking weakly, assisted by Vasha.

"Tell me just what happened from the moment your husband left the room."

"We had been having trouble, and I have been living in my own rooms. I—I have never been a wife to him. He—he and my guardian, Murtri, have been very cruel and I planned to run away. My maid was up packing my things, and when he left the table I was afraid—afraid he would stop her."

"Did you meet him upstairs?"

"Y-yes. He was in my rooms, and had seized my maid and was about to choke her. I had purchased a revolver to protect myself, and I got it out and called to him to let her alone. He saw me. His face grew white with fear, then red with rage. 'So you are going to leave!' he said, and started for me. I pulled the trigger——"

"And then——"

"My wrists are very weak. Murtri used to twist them, trying to make me bend to his will and yield to my—my husband"—her eyes flashed—"and I have been in bed nearly all week, unable to use my hands. The discharge of the revolver sent such terrible pains up my arms that I do not know what happened. Everything went black and I—I fainted."

Fitzgerald turned to Vasha. "You were in the room?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did the shot strike him?"

"No, sir. The shot went——" She pointed to indicate the ceiling.

"What about your domestic troubles, Mrs. King? You said Mr. Murtri was responsible."

"Murtri persuaded me to marry King; made me promise. Murtri was my—my guardian, and I had to obey him."

Fitzgerald motioned Vasha to take her mistress back to her seat.

"Did anybody see King alive after the first shot was heard?"

Robert stepped forward reluctantly and gave his name.

"You were one of the guests who ran upstairs after the first shot?"

He nodded.

"Explain just what you did, what you saw, and what happened."

"I went at once to Mrs. King's rooms."

"You knew the way?"

"Yes. I had promised to help her make her escape to-night. I had come to the dinner armed in case there should be trouble."

The lieutenant looked at him narrowly. "Dangerous business, interfering in another man's private affairs like that. Never mind, go on."

"I found her on the floor, unconscious, and put her on the bed. Then I hurried out, determined to find her husband and make him account for his treatment of her and so——"

"How would you make him account to you, an outsider? You were armed—did you intend to kill him? Are you anything to Mrs. King?"

Robert ignored the last part of the question. "My mind was hazy. I didn't know exactly what I intended to do. I went up through the house, looking for him, and finally thought he would be in the circular room. When I got there the door was locked, but there is a peep-hole and I looked through. He was standing in the middle of the floor with a revolver in his hand. He heard the click of the metal slide as I moved it and wheeled around and fired right at me through the door."

"But why should he fire at you? However, go ahead."

"I was angered. Unthinkingly, I started to raise my own revolver when I was set upon by Murtri and nearly choked to death. When I came to again they were breaking in the door, and they found Mr. King dead."

Fitzgerald, puzzled, called Murtri. "Why did you attack him?"

"What else would I do? I found him aiming a revolver through the door and supposed he was trying to harm some one. I tried to disarm him and in the struggle his gun went off through the door, killing Mr. King. The hole is in the door." The Egyptian smiled slightly.

"Wasn't that hole made by the shot from King's revolver?"

"I heard no shot." Murtri glared at Robert.

Howells spoke up. "A shot in the circular room would not be heard very far outside of it. The room is nearly soundproof, on account of the rites held there. The shot Bruce fired went into the wall. I saw the place and picked up his revolver. The shot through the door, according to the splinters, was from the inside, and it flattened itself against the wall opposite without penetration."

He looked at Murtri. "You throttled him pretty thoroughly for a man just intending to prevent him using his gun."

"I was angry. He had planned to elope with

Mrs. King to-night, and until Mrs. King met Mr. Bruce on the night of her marriage there was no question of her feelings."

Fitzgerald turned to Robert. "Did you intend to elope to-night?"

"Yes, but her husband's cruelty and Murtri's——"

"Confine yourself to answering my questions. Did she meet you before she married Mr. King?"

"Yes, a few moments before."

"This looks black, Mr. Bruce. I don't say you have anything to do with this murder, but you haven't been playing the part of a man in trying to break up a home and you'll have no sympathy from me, or any decent man or woman in the city." The policeman wiped his neck, frowning.

At this moment the medical examiner came down from the circular room and went up to the lieutenant.

"It's just as well you let the body lie, Fitzgerald, but the result is surprising. Of course, he was all curled up, but you know your man isn't shot at all. Warren King's death was caused by heart failure."

CHAPTER TEN.

IN THE CIRCULAR ROOM.

LIEUTENANT FITZGERALD turned to Howells. His expression was rueful. "This doesn't look like an affair for the police after all."

"I'm not so sure about that," the detective said.

"Why?"

"Well, why did King leave the table? A note was brought to him, you know. Then why did he go to the circular room after his wife shot at him? Why did he shoot at the door when he heard the slide of the peep-hole moved? Where did he get the revolver, and why did he have it? Why did he destroy the shrine, or if he didn't, who did?"

Fitzgerald called the old butler. "What was the note you brought Mr. King at the table, Whitehead?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Who gave it to you?"

"Why, I—I——" His eyes traveled around in a sort of helpless way to—Marjorie.

She glanced away, biting her lip.

"Well?" impatiently.

"I don't remember, sir."

"H—ll!" Fitzgerald began to flush with anger.

There was a sudden interruption.

"Mr. Howells! Mr. Howells! I've got it! C'm'ere." The voice was Gene's. She was looking at the bits of paper she had been trying all during the investigation to fit together. She beckoned again. "Look! Here's the note you're asking about. I've got it all pieced together."

Like a fine jig-saw puzzle, so tiny were the pieces, lay the paper King had torn up and dropped in the nut dish.

"If you desire peace of mind, come to the circular room at once. MONA LISA."

Howells turned to Gene. "Explain what you know, little Hawkshaw."

She giggled. "From where I sat," she began, "I could look into the den and see Miss Gates—or rather her feet and some of the middle of her. All at once I saw she was moving and I watched. She got up and looked in at us. I dropped my eyes and she didn't catch me watching. She took some of the pillows and fixed a dummy, so it would look like she was still there. I had seen her trying to get Mr. King's goat, and I thought that maybe she had sent the note to worry him."

"What do you mean," interrupted Fitzgerald, "trying to get his goat?"

"Well, she was the model for the picture he bought, the one they call an 'American Mona Lisa,' and the picture worried him. At the first dinner she took a pose, to show how she had been the model, and she looked right at him, and hard, and did it on purpose, and it worried him a lot. And then she put a funny little cheap ring on her finger for a while and held it so he'd see it, and he looked at it as if he was seeing a ghost."

"Where did you get the pieces of this note?"

"When everybody ran upstairs I looked in the den and saw Miss Gates wasn't there. Then when they told me Mr. King was shot I thought of the note and knew it had something to do with it. I ran downstairs and got it just in time, because old Louis was looking around for it. I had seen Mr. King drop the pieces in the nut dish, and I took dish and all."

Howells and Fitzgerald looked at Marjorie. She felt their gaze.

"I can tell you about Mr. King's death," she said. "I was an eyewitness."

"You wrote the note?" Fitzgerald queried.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I would rather tell of his death first."

"You witnessed it?"

"Yes."

"Where from?"

"The peep-hole in the south door of the circular room. I opened the slide very slightly, and he didn't know he was being watched."

"How did you know where the circular room was?" interrupted Howells. "And how to reach the south door? You hadn't been upstairs before."

"I've had the plans of the house for months."

"Tell us of the death," directed Fitzgerald, "or else start at the beginning of your own connection with the affair."

"When King entered the room," she began,

"it was empty, and at first he was going to turn back. He swore. He glanced at the shrine, however, and hurried over. The little flame supposed to burn day and night had been extinguished, and in place of the chalice there was a revolver and a note. He looked at them stupidly for a time; then he put the revolver in his pocket rather absent-mindedly and picked up the note. This he held for a long while before he would open it. When he did so he went white, and he looked around the room with an expression of utter abject fright."

"What did the note say?" interrupted the lieutenant. "Do you know?"

"Yes. It read: 'The only peace of mind you will ever get is in death. Your coming here means you wish it, and I presume are willing to pay for it. Therefore, in exactly ten minutes from the time of your entrance to this room I shall shoot you through one of the closed and locked doors. MONA LISA.'

"After reading the note he tore it into very fine bits, the same as he had torn the note delivered to him at the table. He dropped the pieces on the shrine. With a sudden thought he looked at his watch, wetting his lips as he did so. The first thought of the man, upon facing death, was the number of minutes left to him. Always his thought was of self."

"Please, Miss Gates, do not moralize."

"His next thought was to take it all as a joke. He laughed, squared his shoulders and walked to the north door. He put his hand on the knob, threw his weight against the door to fling it open and found it locked. This frightened him a bit, but he laughed once more and went to the west door.

"That one he tried with less confidence. There was a cry from him as he found it locked also. He stole over to the south door, and for a long while he couldn't summon enough nerve to try it. When he did and found it locked he collapsed against the panel. My face was pressed against the other side to watch.

"Gradually he gained control of himself, but he was still frightened. He went back to the shrine and performed some sort of obeisance, after which he dropped to his knees and prayed."

"This is all very leisurely movement on his part," Howells broke in. "You must remember that he went direct to the circular room after the first shot, and that we, likewise, all started up at the same time."

"The time seemed less to you because you were in a strange house. He knew the way. Furthermore, I timed him to the second. From the instant of his entrance, which was some moments after the first shot, exactly eight and three-quarters minutes elapsed before he fell to the floor. It was as long again when you broke in."

"Fitzgerald was impatient. "Let her go on."

"All at once," she continued, "he seemed to grasp the actual imminency of death. At the same time he seemed to pull himself together as if determining to fight for his life. He ran to the north door, pounding upon it.

"'Listen to me,' he cried. 'I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I have wanted to make amends. Give me a chance.' He rushed to the west door and repeated much the same. Then he came to the south. He was becoming frantic. 'I'll give you anything. Have mercy. You shall have any amount of money—a thousand dollars—a hundred thousand—a million dollars! Give me a chance to make amends.'

"Suddenly his mood changed again. The lack of response, the silence, the terror of an unseen avenger—all was wearing upon him. He became angry. He tried to break through the west door, flinging his weight against it again and again. His anger became the greater as he realized the extent of his helplessness.

"He glanced at the shrine, and that seemed, for the moment, to represent every influence that had brought him to the situation in which he found himself. He ran over and started tearing it down with his hands. He flung the pieces in every direction, breaking them into the smallest possible bits. The destruction complete, he gazed at his vandalism; he had worked off most of his anger. Rage gave place to fear.

"He looked at his watch and wet his lips again. There were three doors facing him. He turned and ran over to the edge of the room, apparently to get out of the way of any of the doors in a way around before he realized it was impossible to get out of the way of any of the door in a circular room. Not until this moment did he remember the revolver. His hand struck it accidently and he pulled it out, clasping it. His mood changed.

"He smiled a grim smile, and as he came to the center of the room I did not grasp his idea. He began to practice swinging around so as to send, in quick succession, a bullet through each of the doors. Thus he would anticipate his would-be assassin. But it occurred to him to see if his revolver was loaded. He broke it. It contained one shell. One shell!"

"Please, Miss Gates, it's dramatic enough of itself."

"Suicide was his next thought. The revolver had been put there for that purpose. He put it to his temple, but didn't have the nerve. He tried again, but he couldn't do it.

"He took out his watch. The passage of time frightened him. He flung the watch over into the wreckage of the shrine. An expression of desperation came over his face. He took post in the middle of the room, ready to reply to the shot from whatever door it should come. It was while standing there that Mr. Bruce made the noise at the north, and he fired.

"There was no answering shot. He flung his revolver away and folded his arms. Nothing happened. The strain began to tell on him.

"He called out: 'Shoot! For God's sake, shoot!'

"Not a second later there was the sound of Mr. Bruce's shot. I could hear it from the hall behind me, and it was close enough to the door for the man in the room to hear it. He clasped his heart. I guess he thought he was shot. He seemed just to crumple to the floor and lie there.

"I heard no one coming and entered the room, hurrying over to him from behind in case he was alive. I didn't want him to see me. As I leaned over I heard his voice, very faint:

"'Dorothy! Dolly——' It was the name of the first Mrs. King.

"I knew I must hurry away. I could hear signs of a scuffle outside the north door. I leaned over once more and felt his pulse. He was dead! Then I bent closer. I had hated him, and I had killed him, but—he was my father. I kissed him."

Howells and Fitzgerald looked at each other. The guests, the others in the room, were silent, awe-struck, horrified. Howells turned to her.

"He didn't know you were his daughter, did he? Why did you hate him?"

"I hated him, Mr. Howells, because he was ashamed—ashamed of my mother; never legally married her. But I didn't intend to kill him; merely wished to make him suffer as he had made my mother suffer."

"Go on."

"One night Neil Cavendish saw me." She glanced at him, and her head drooped a bit as she saw the look of pain in his face. "I was thinking of my father, and the unconsciously bitter expression caught Neil's fancy. He wanted to paint me. He never had before. Then a crazy idea struck me. I would make him paint just that expression, would dress like my mother used to dress as near as I could imagine it, and in some way would maneuver to have Mr. King see that picture. I knew he would buy it. I wanted him to sit before a representation of her, looking at him in hate, until it drove him to the point of unhappiness he had driven her.

"Day after day I sat for Neil. I investigated the Order of Osiris, and through a talk with an art dealer who was a member I maneuvered to have Neil interested, so he would join." She paused and her voice softened. "Fate helped me at every turn. I made him suffer."

"And you killed him!" Howells's reminder was cold, sharp.

The blood rushed into her face. "That was for a different reason. When I saw Eleanor marry him, saw he was making a second wife as unhappy as the first, I—he wasn't fit to live!"

There were several actual minutes of silence before the detective asked his final question. "Your prophecy, Miss Gates. Was it a fake, part of a deliberate plan?"

"Yes."

He turned to Fitzgerald. "You'll have to hold her, but the trial will be an exceedingly perfunctory one."

Cavendish hurried to the side of the girl. "Marjorie!"

"Yes, Neil." She did not glance up.

"You—you will need bail, and——"

"After all that has happened?" she faltered.

"After all that has happened!" he assured her.

All at once the tears came. "Neil, you're a brick!"

Murtri approached Fitzgerald. "If you are through, sir——" He hesitated, and his manner was quite deferential. "Mrs. King should be allowed to retire, and the guests permitted to leave. As trustee of Mr. King's estate I shall hold myself at your service——" He stopped and waited for the lieutenant to express himself.

Robert, realizing suddenly that Murtri was taking control of things, woke from a sort of dazed stupor and glanced over at Eleanor. She had straightened up in alarm, and there were spots of color in each cheek. She looked at Robert, and then, like a child at the approach of danger, ran to him, dropping on her knees and clinging so tightly that he could hardly breathe. He took her head between his hands, felt his eyes begin to burn.

Murtri hurried up, face black with anger. "Remember your duty to your dead husband, Mrs. King." He seized her roughly by the arm.

Robert arose with clenched fists. A policeman started over towards them.

At this moment there was an intrusion at the door. A little man hurried in and up to Howells.

"They're here, and I brought them right over."

Murtri, glancing at the first of the newcomers, a deeply tanned Southern type of gentleman—Spanish or Creole—blanched suddenly. Eleanor, turning, gave one cry and rushed to his arms.

"Father! You've come. You forgive me!"

Howells, with the other arrival, approached Murtri. "Murtri—or Rupasha, as we know you—you're wanted by this representative of the law for abduction, and"—a slight smile—"for allowing the 'tongue of Osiris' to speak; murder, we call it. Will you come quietly?"

Murtri drew himself up. "I am above the law. I have been promised invisible protection. I am to die in my own temple, gloriously, as I have served Osiris and the gods of Egypt!"

The detective seized him. Another policeman stepped up. But Murtri, with a quick sidewise jump, wrested away. With almost noiseless movements he darted past the astonished policemen at the door to the library and into that room. Instantly half a dozen men were after him. He got through the panel to the secret passageway, but in his haste miscalculated the narrow steps and plunged down headlong. When they pulled him out his neck was broken. He had died in his temple and in his robes of office.

Betrayed By A Scarlet Thread

By FANNIE FORREST

"THERE is more in the case than appears on the surface!"

The scene was a court-room.

The speaker was a lawyer whom the court had provided to defend the young man just examined on the charge of theft and remanded for trial.

The accused was Charlie Richards—a finely-built, handsomely-featured, brown-eyed young fellow, of twenty-one or two.

He had been an employee in a large shoe manufactory, and had hitherto borne an unblemished reputation.

The person who figured in the prosecution subscribed himself Briscom De Buel, a native of France.

He was a man nearing middle age, well formed and erect, with shrewd countenance and keen yellowish gray eyes, and of a rather striking appearance.

He claimed to be the nephew and heir of a wealthy old French noble, and had been admitted to some of the more asistocratic social circles here.

His account of the theft was somewhat complicated.

He stated that he had called at the house of a Mrs. Dorny, an elderly widow who, with her young daughter, Cecile, he had frequently befriended, and whom he supposed to be worthy of his charitable efforts on her behalf.

On this occasion he had requested a glass of water, which he fancied tasted strangely.

Shortly after partaking of it, he became conscious of a dazed and drowsy sensation, which continued until he finally left the house.

The prisoner, Richards, was in the house at the time.

After leaving, he missed his watch and a ring.

He had mentioned his loss to no one, until he happened to meet the prisoner, who was openly wearing the ring.

He had then caused young Richards' arrest.

He had also issued a warrant and had the Dorney house searched for the costly watch.

It was found, among the effects of Cecile Dorny. There was also found a quantity of laces and a piece of almost priceless silk, which the searching officer at once declared to be stolen goods—part of an immense amount of plunder which had been taken from a large silk and lace store some months previously.

These disclosures resulted in Mrs. Dorny and her daughter being also held for trial.

In regard to the ring, they totally contradicted Briscom De Buel's statement.

They maintained that the ring was his free gift to Cecile, to dispose of it as she chose. She had playfully insisted on its being worn by Richards, to whom she was betrothed.

In regard to the watch and the other articles, they denied their knowledge of the things being in the house.

They seemed horrified at the result of the officer's search; and no questioning could shake their stout assertion of innocence.

"It's a queer tangle," the lawyer said to me. "I'd stake a good deal though on the innocence of that pretty little Cecile Dorny. There's villainy somewhere. I wish you would just look up the antecedents of this man De Buel."

As a detective I agreed to do so; my professional interest had already been aroused by the remarkable complications of the case, and I had noticed a trifling circumstance which I fancied might prove a clue to something not yet revealed.

When the piece of silk and the laces were shown in court, I had noted upon each certain marks such as no merchant ever places upon his goods.

The marks were of two forms, an angle and a square, large and distinct, and made by drawing a heavy thread of scarlet linen through the fabric.

It struck me that the marks had a significance known only to the thief or the receiver of the stolen goods.

I drew out one of the longest threads, which I exhibited to several manufacturers and dealers of that sort of article.

It was a kind of floss spun by hand-work, made by peasants in Europe for a certain coarse embroidery, and it was never "imported" they all agreed.

"Then it is all the surer clue," I thought. "If it is not imported nor manufactured here, there isn't many likely to have a sample."

Several days passed.

I had made inquiries in different quarters concerning Briscom De Buel; what I learned indicated he was all he claimed to be.

He occupied a small but elegant suite of rooms at one of the best hotels; his acquaintance had been accepted by two or three well-known society men.

It was an established fact that the old French noble, Baron De Buel, really existed, and that he had a nephew who was to be his heir.

I happened to be at one of the up-town police stations one afternoon, when the sergeant drew me aside.

"There's a lady in the captain's private room. I can't make out quite what she wants. I wish you would see her," the sergeant said to me.

I stepped into the room and saw before me a

portly and majestic woman, richly dressed, and appearing in a state of great perplexity.

"You ze captain?" she inquired, in a broken foreign accent.

"I am here in his stead. What can I do for you, madame?"

"Oh, good monsieur, if you help me zat leetle to have again my watch—my bracelet!—zay of one match, one set!—all rubies and gold worth many moneys! But I prize them not for value so much; they so beautiful, I get none others like them, so I say I must have them back again!"

At the mention of the watch set with rubies, I could scarcely restrain an exclamation of wonder.

It was the description of the watch which was found among poor Cecile Dorny's effects.

"Did you lose your watch and bracelet, madame, or were they stolen? Please give the full particulars?"

"I like not to give ze particulars; I give ze description; you then find them; I come here and get them. No trouble, no talk, nothing zat would do ze harm to anybody."

"To undertake the recovery of missing property without some information to work upon is quite out of the question, madame."

"Oh, my pretty, lettle watch, my bracelet so most beautiful! I will speak to the monsieur capitaine! You not understand me, monsieur detective."

She arose with a majestic air and swept from the room.

The door had scarcely closed behind her portly figure, when I noticed she had left her reticule—an ordinary black leather hand bag—in the chair she had just vacated.

The reticule was slightly open, and sundry miscellaneous objects among its contents were exposed to my view.

One of those objects was an oblong ball, queerly wound, of scarlet thread.

An uncontrollable ejaculation escaped my lips, as I snatched the queerly wound thread from the hand-bag, and detected that in the curious texture and peculiar hue it was identical with the fragment I had in my possession—the fragment which had formed the significant mark of part of the stolen goods.

There was a little package of freshly-printed cards in another pocket of the hand-bag.

I drew one forth.

It was inscribed, "Madame La Sensky, fashionable modiste," with a street and number.

I slipped the card into my vest pocket and stepped hurriedly into the outer office.

The woman was still there, chatting more volubly than comprehensively to the sergeant at the desk.

"You forgot you reticule, Madame La Sensky. Permit me to return it to you," said I, extending the hand-bag toward her.

"I thank you, Monsieur Detective. You save me coming back. You take my fee now, and more if you need. I pay well always," she said.

But I declined the fee. When a fee means a bribe I was not the detective to accept it.

"If the missing property you have described chances to be brought to my notice, it shall be promptly restored to its legitimate owner," I said, as I walked away.

We had left the police station together, each going opposite directions.

Madame La Sensky had taken a surface car going toward the street designated on her card, and I had started homeward.

I was within a few doors of a certain pawnbroking establishment, when I noticed a tall man stopping under a street lamp just ahead of me.

One glance convinced me that the man was in disguise.

The rough frock coat, the bushy red beard, the battered sailor cap—were not in harmony with a certain elegance of bearing manifest in his movements.

Directly under the three golden balls, in the full light of the street lamp, the man stopped and drew some article into view.

As the bright gas gleam flashed upon it a magnificent ruby bracelet was disclosed before my eyes.

I was convinced it was the identical bracelet which Madame La Sensky described.

As he turned it about in the clear light I perceived that the pattern of the setting was the same as that of the watch which had caused poor Cecile Dorny's imprisonment.

I had just determined that it was my duty to arrest the man, when he suddenly shot a seeming regretful look toward the lighted windows beneath the three golden balls, and then quite as suddenly whirled and walked rapidly around a near corner.

"He had intended to pawn it, but his fear of detection has caused him to hesitate," was my thought as I promptly followed him.

It was a long chase.

I had resolved to make him my prisoner, and I did not allow him to elude my sight.

But his untiring speed was almost incredible, and I was thoroughly fatigued when at last he turned into the hallway of a newly erected double building which I judged to be built for stores and offices.

The door of the hallway was not closed.

Without reflection, I pursued him up a staircase, which still smelled strongly of fresh paint and plaster.

The second flight was lighted only by a single gas jet burning rather dimly in the hall below.

But I could hear his footsteps ascending the third flight, although I could no longer see him.

From first to last, in spite of his long and rapid walk, he had appeared unaware of being followed.

He had moved straight along with a pre-occupied air, and in a business-like fashion.

I presumed that if he did not have an office in the building himself, he was about to visit some person who had.

At the top of the third flight, the landing was pitchy dark.

His footsteps had ceased; and as I took a few paces forward, listening, a body like a mass of steel lunged against me, and I was pushed violently aside.

The next second I felt myself falling down, and yet down into a black and fathomless depth.

And as I realized that I had been trapped, an exultant chuckle sounded through the darkness.

As I fell, I had instinctively flung out my arms.

My right hand clutched a narrow beam spanning a corner of the abyss, which I now knew to be the elevator well!

I swung around and my left hand came in contact with a pendant rope.

To support myself by the beam for any length of time was impossible.

It was too short to enable me to draw myself up; and I was resolved to trust my chances to the rope.

If I could slide down gradually I might get a foothold somewhere.

I seized it with both hands, but as I threw my weight upon it, to my horror it began to slip down swiftly from a pulley somewhere above.

I had barely time to realize the frightful danger of the situation before I struck violently upon some solid substance—the top of the elevator itself.

At the same moment a lantern light flashed through the wire door, about ten feet above me, and I looked up to meet the astounded gaze of the watchman.

"What's the matter down there? What are you doing in the building, anyhow?" he growled.

I explained the position.

"It looks more as if somebody was after you," was the reply. "Can you keep a steady hold till I raise the trap?"

I answered that I could.

He disappeared, and after an interval the elevator began to ascend.

At the landing above the watchman opened the door, and then let the elevator down sufficiently for me to step out safely.

It seemed that on the opposite side where I had fallen there had been some alteration in process during the day, and the workmen had neglected the precaution of putting up a guard.

"I s'pose they didn't calculate on the need of it, seeing there is only one office let on that side of the building," the watchman said.

I inquired who had rented the office.

He did not know; he referred me to the agent of the building for any further information.

From the agent I learned that the gentleman who had rented the office was a lawyer and had been out of the city for some days.

I could only arrive at the conclusion that the unknown man whom I had followed had acted on the mere impulse of the moment when he led me into the new building.

He had been conscious of pursuit, and had assumed ignorance of it to throw me off my guard.

He had observed the door open, as the careless workmen had very likely left it, and at the spur of the instant he had entered the building.

In the beginning, he had only intended to elude me and baffle pursuit; the sight of the unguarded elevator well had suggested a means of ridding himself of my surveillance.

The more I pondered over the singular incident the more anxious I was to effect his capture.

I was convinced that the ruby bracelet in his possession was the article which Madame La Sensky had requested me to recover.

If he had stolen the bracelet, it was evident he had also committed the theft of the watch, which had resulted in the imprisonment of pretty Cecile Dorny.

Could it be possible that the girl was an accomplice of this disguised and unknown thief?

Unless I should unearth some hidden villainy elsewhere through the clue of the scarlet thread, unless I should bring to light some plot to destroy the girl and her handsome young lover, Charlie Richards, they were both certainly doomed to the ignominy of conviction.

As my thoughts returned to the clue of the scarlet thread, I remembered another trifling circumstance which now seemed to hold some little significance.

The mysterious Madame La Sensky's words implied that she had missed other articles besides the watch and bracelet.

What these other articles were she refused to explain.

Could it be the laces and the piece of silk—the things which the searching officers had identified as part of the plunder from a store robbed some time previously?

I believed I had grasped the link which was to unravel the tangled web.

I determined to keep an eye on Madame La Sensky's movements.

A week elapsed before I detected anything of importance. I learned, however, that Cecile Dorny had once been employed in madame's dressmaking rooms, that it was there the girl had met the elegant Briscom De Buel, and that the latter was still a frequent visitor at madame's house.

At the end of the week I had obtained sufficient evidence to justify me in shadowing the house.

I was loitering in the vicinity of the house early one evening when a man came through the basement door, glanced furtively up and down the avenue, and then dodged quickly around the near corner of a cross street.

I could hardly restrain a cry of satisfaction.

In the rough frock coat, the battered sailor hat, the bushy red beard, I recognized the man who had forced me over the unguarded edge of the elevator well.

I knew that direct pursuit might be useless; so I made a detour through a vacant lot, and succeeded in reaching the end of the block a few rods in advance of him.

He approached at a swinging stride, and appeared not to observe that I was sauntering toward him.

As he was about to pass me, I executed an awkward stumble, tried to right myself, and in doing so managed to entangle my left hand in his bushy red beard.

Certain as I was that the beard was a disguise, I was scarcely prepared for the startling discovery I made, as I snatched the disguise from his features.

What I had detected by my maneuver deprived me for a moment of the power to speak or stir.

That moment afforded him an advantage.

With a lightning movement he seized the bushy disguise, restored it to its place, and darted away like a greyhound.

But in his terrible fear of capture he had dropped a suspicious-looking bundle of considerable size, which he brought from Madame La Sensky's house.

The force of the fall had loosened its wrapping, and as I picked it up I perceived that it contained an uncut piece of finest velvet and a number of costly jeweled ornaments.

I adjusted the wrapping and hurried to the residence of the lawyer, whom the court had appointed to defend young Richards and pretty Cecile Dorny.

"Do you think the fellow recognized you or saw that you recognized him when you tore off his disguise?" the lawyer asked, after I had related my investigations and discoveries.

"I think not. I managed it as an accident; his consternation hindered him from being very observing."

"We must have a warrant the first thing in the morning."

But it was not until the next evening I succeeded in locating the immediate whereabouts of the man I wanted.

It was to the rooms of a certain fashionable clubhouse where I traced him at a rather late hour finally.

As the door was oponed for me quietly and I paused on the threshold, I beheld a scene of uncommon animation.

In the center of the room stood Briscom De Buel, held fast by the restraining hands of a couple of his companions.

Briscom De Buel was foaming with rage and glaring like a tiger upon a distinguished looking young man, who indignantly confronted him.

"You need not fear for me, gentlemen," he said; "I am not likely to stain my hands nor honor by striking a coward and impostor."

"I am no coward; and how are you to prove I am an impostor?" the man who claimed to be Briscom De Buel snarled as he struggled to release himself.

"It is easily proved. As I happen to be the genuine Briscom De Buel you can be nothing else but an impostor."

At this crisis I stepped into the midst of them, and snapped a pair of handcuffs over the impostor's wrists.

"Whoever else he is he is my prisoner at present. He is charged with conspiracy as well as with the offense of receiving and disposing of stolen goods," I explained.

Had a thunderbolt dazed the man he could not have been more cowed.

Without making the slightest resistance he allowed me to lead him away.

The entire mystery of the case was unfolded at the trial, which was not unnecessarily delayed.

He was the brother and accomplice of the fashionable dressmaker Madame La Sensky.

They had made themselves rich by their transactions in stolen goods.

The brother, however, was an inveterate gambler. It was to satisfy his passion for the gaming-table when he was short of funds that he had abstracted the precious ruby watch and bracelet from madame's jewel casket.

She had wished to recover them without implicating him; too much investigation might have betrayed their illegal business. That consideration was her motive for refusing to divulge her suspicions.

The watch, with the costly silk and laces which had brought about the imprisonment of pretty Cecile Dorny, he had managed to hide in a bundle of work which the girl had received from his sister.

His confession exonerated the girl.

He loved her, and was determined she should be his wife.

When he learned of her betrothal to Richards he was furious with jealousy.

It was then he planned revenge, and caused young Richards' arrest for the theft of the ring which had been his gift to Cecile.

An hour after his confession was legally attested the man lay dead in his cell.

A tiny empty vial which had contained some subtle and powerful poison told how he died.

Madame La Sensky is now serving out a long sentence in prison.

Mrs. Dorny and her pretty daughter were honorably acquitted, and Richards also.

The marriage of the handsome young fellow to pretty Cecile was the happy ending of the case—the complications of which were unraveled by the clue of the scarlet thread.

I will add that the peculiar thread was made by Madame La Sensky. She had learned its manufacture while a child, and the mark upon her goods—the angle and square—was her private price mark.

The Twins

By IDA PALMER TUCKER.

THE superintendent at Headquarters informed Dan Keen late one afternoon that he was needed in a perplexed and entangled affair, which would probably occupy him for some time, as orders had been given to investigate the matter thoroughly.

"There is," he added, "a Mr. Repton, a highly respectable country lawyer. He is from Philadelphia, and is staying at Webb's Hotel. You are to see him at once. He will put you in possession of all the facts connected with the case. You will then use all possible diligence to ascertain, first, if the alleged crime has been really committed, and if so you must bring the criminal to justice."

Dan found Mr. Repton, a stout, bald-headed, gentlemanly person, apparently about sixty years of age, just in the act of going out.

"I have a pressing engagement for this evening, Mr. Keen," said he, after glancing at the introductory note Dan brought, "and cannot possibly go into the business with the attention it requires till the morning. But I'll tell you what: One of the parties concerned, with whom you will have especially to deal, is, I know, to be at the Garden Theater this evening. It is of course necessary that you should be thoroughly acquainted with his looks; and if you will go with me in the taxicab that is waiting outside I will step with you into the theater and point him out." Dan assented, and on entering the theatre Mr. Repton, who kept behind him, to avoid observation, directed his attention to a group of persons occupying the front seats of the third box in the lower tier from the stage, on the right-hand side of the house. They were a gentleman of about thirty years of age, his wife, a very elegant person, a year or two younger, and three children, the eldest of whom, a boy, could not have been more than six or seven years old. This done, Mr. Repton left the theater, and about two hours afterward Dan did the same.

The next morning the detective breakfasted with the lawyer by appointment. As soon as the meal was concluded business was at once entered upon.

"You closely observed Charles Malvern yesterday evening, I presume?" said Mr. Repton.

"I paid great attention to the gentleman you pointed out to me," answered Dan, "if he is Charles Malvern."

"He is, or at least—— But of that presently. First let me inform you that Malvern, a few months ago, was a beggared gambler, or nearly so, to speak with precision. He is now in good health, has a charming wife and a family to whom he is much attached, an income of about twelve thousand dollars a year, and has not gambled since he came into possession of his uncle's property. This premised, is there anything remarkable in Malvern's demeanor?"

"My impression was that he was laboring under a terrible depression of spirits, caused, I imagine, by pecuniary difficulties. His manner was restless, abstracted. He paid no attention whatever to anything going on on the stage, except when his wife or one of the children especially challenged his attention; and then, a brief answer returned, he relapsed into the same restless unobservance as before. He is very nervous too. The box door was suddenly opened once or twice, and I noticed his sudden start each time."

"You have exactly described him. Well, that perturbed, unquiet feverishness of manner has constantly distinguished him since he inherited the Redwood estates, and only since then. It strengthens me in possibly an unfounded suspicion, which—— But I had better, if I wish to render myself intelligible, explain the case in due sequence.

"Thomas Redwood, whose property on Long Island is chiefly in the neighborhood of Lynbrook, met his death, as did his only son, Archibald, about six months ago in a very sudden and shocking manner. They were out trying a splendid mare for the first time in harness which Redwood had purchased at a very high price. Two grooms on horseback were in attendance, to render assistance if required, for the animal was a very powerful, high-spirited one. All went very well till they arrived in front of Mr. Meredith's place, Oak Villa. This gentleman has a passion for firing off a brass cannon on the anniversary of such events as he deems worthy of the honor. This happened, unfortunately, to be one of Mr. Meredith's gunpowder days; and as Redwood and his son were passing a stream of light flashed directly in the eyes of the mare, followed by the roar of artillery, at no more than about ten paces off. The terrified animal became instantly unmanageable, got the bit between her teeth, and darted off at the wildest speed. The road is a curved and rugged one; and after tearing along for half a mile, the off-wheel of the carriage came, at an abrupt turn, full against a rock. The tremendous shock hurled the two gentlemen upon the road with frightful violence, tore the vehicle almost completely asunder, and so injured the mare that she died the next day. The alarmed grooms, who had not only been unable to render assistance, but even to keep up with the terrified mare, found Archibald Redwood quite dead. The

spine had been broken close to the nape of the neck; his head, in fact, was doubled up, so to speak, under the body.

"Thomas Redwood still breathed, and was taken to his house. Surgical assistance was promptly obtained; but the internal injuries were so great that the old gentleman expired a few hours after he had reached his home. Meantime I was hastily sent for, and when I arrived Redwood was still fully conscious. He imparted to me matters of great importance, and he requested me, after his decease, to give them my best care and attention. His son, I was aware, had but just returned from a tour on the Continent, where he had been absent for nearly a year, but I was not aware, neither was his father till the day before his death, that Archibald had not only secretly married a Miss Ashton of a poor family, but had returned home, not only for the purpose of soliciting his father's forgiveness, but to ask that the probable heir of Redwood might be born within the walls of the big manor house. After the first burst of passion and surprise, Mr. Redwood, one of the best-hearted men in the universe, forgave his son's disobedience, quite rightly imputing it to his own foolish urgency in pressing a union with one of the Lacy family, with which the old man was very intimate, and whose villa joined his.

"Well, this young lady, now a widow, had been left by her husband at Brooklyn, while he came on to seek a reconciliation with his father. Archibald Redwood was to have departed the next morning in one of his father's touring cars to bring his wife home, and the old man, with his dying breath, told me to assure the girl of his entire forgiveness, and his earnest hope and trust that through her male offspring the race of the Redwoods might be continued. If no son of Archibald should be born Charles Malvern, a cousin of Thomas Redwood, would get the property. The old man had always felt a partiality towards Malvern, and had assisted him pecuniarily a hundred times. Redwood also directed me to draw as quickly as I could a short will bequeathing Charles Malvern one hundred thousand dollars. I wrote as quickly as I could, but by the time the paper was ready for his signature Thomas Redwood was no longer conscious. I placed the pen in his hand, and fancied he understood the purpose, for his fingers closed faintly upon it, but the power to guide was utterly gone, and only a slight, scratching stroke marked the paper as the pen slid across it in the direction of the falling arm.

"Mr. Malvern arrived at the house about an hour after Redwood breathed his last. It was clearly apparent through all his sorrow the joy of riches, splendor, station, was dancing at his heart, and, in spite of all his efforts to conceal it, sparkling in his eye. I briefly, but as gently as I could, acquainted him with the true position of affairs. The revulsion of feeling which ensued entirely unmanned him; and it was not till an hour afterwards that he recovered his self-possession sufficiently to converse reasonably and coolly. At last he became apparently reconciled to the sudden overclouding of his imaginatively brilliant prospects, and it was agreed that, as he was a relative of the widow, he should at once set off to break the sad news to her. Well, a few days after his departure, I received a letter from him, stating that Mrs. Redwood, though prematurely confined in consequence of the intelligence of her husband's death, had given birth to a female child, and that both mother and daughter were as well as could be expected. This, you will agree, seemed perfectly satisfactory?"

"Entirely so," assented Dan.

"Mr. Malvern was now unquestionably the proprietor of the Redwood estates. In accordance with the conditions of the will he was to pay five thousand dollars life annuity to the late Mr. Redwood's infant granddaughter.

"Malvern returned to the manor house, where his wife and family soon afterward arrived. Mrs. Redwood had been joined by her mother, Mrs. Ashton, and would, when able to undertake the journey, return to her maternal home in New York. It was about two months after Thomas Redwood's death that I determined to pay Mrs. Redwood a visit, in order to see to the winding up of the personal estate, which it was desirable to accomplish as speedily as possible, and then a new and terrible light flashed upon me."

"What?" Dan exclaimed, for the first time breaking the silence. "What could there be to reveal?"

"Only," rejoined Mr. Repton, "that ill, delirious, as Mrs. Redwood admitted herself to have been, it was her unconquerable conviction that she had given birth to twins!"

"Good Lord! And you suspect——"

"We don't know what to suspect. Should the lady's belief be correct, the missing child might have been a boy. You understand?"

"I do. But is there any tangible evidence to justify this suspicion?"

"Yes; the surgeon and his wife, a Mr. and Mrs. Williams, who attended Mrs. Redwood, have suddenly disappeared from Brooklyn, and from no explainable motive, having abandoned a fair practice there."

"That has certainly an ugly look."

"True; and a few days ago I received information that Williams has been seen in Boston. He was well dressed and not apparently in any business."

"There certainly appears some ground for suspicion. What plan of operations do you propose?"

"That," replied Mr. Repton, "I must leave to your more practiced sagacity. I can only promise that no means shall be lacking that may be required."

"It will be better, perhaps," suggested Keen,

after an interval of reflection, "that I should proceed to Boston at once. You have, of course, an accurate description of Williams and his wife ready?"

"I have, and very accurate pen-and-ink sketches I am told they are. Besides these, I have also here," continued Mr. Repton, taking from his pocketbook a sheet of carefully-folded satin paper, "a full description of the female baby, drawn up by its mother, under the impression that twins always closely resemble each other. 'Light hair, blue eyes, dimpled chin'—and so on. The lady—a very charming person, I assure you—is chiefly anxious to recover her child. You and I, should our suspicions be confirmed, have other duties to perform."

This was pretty nearly all that passed, and the next day Dan was in Boston.

The search, as he was compelled to be very cautious in his inquiries, was tedious, but finally successful.

Dan soon discovered Mr. and Mrs. Williams living in a pretty house, with neat grounds attached, about two miles out of the Hub. Their assumed name was Burridge, and Keen ascertained from the servant girl that they had one child, a boy, a few months old, of whom neither father nor mother seemed very fond. By dint of much perseverance Dan at length got upon pretty familiar terms with Mr. Burridge, alias Williams. He spent his evenings regularly in a suburban hotel; but with all the painstaking ingenuity Dan employed, all he learned during three weeks was that Burridge intended to emigrate to London. This was very significant information, and very rarely, indeed, was Burridge out of Keen's sight. At length perseverance obtained its reward. One morning Dan discerned his friend make his way to the railway station and there scan with eager looks every passenger that alighted. At last a gentleman arrived by the express train.

Williams instantly accosted him, a taxicab was called, and away they drove. The detective followed in another, and saw them both alight at a hotel in New street. Dan also alighted, and was mentally debating how to proceed when Williams came out of the hotel and proceeded in the direction of his home. Keen followed, overtook him, and soon contrived to ascertain that he and his wife had important business to transact in Boston the next morning, which would render it impossible for him to meet Dan, as he proposed, till two or three o'clock in the afternoon. The next morning Burridge informed Dan he would leave the place, probably forever. An hour after this interesting conversation, Keen, accompanied by the chief of the Boston police, was closeted with the landlord of the hotel in New street—a highly respectable person—who promised them every assistance in his power. Charles Malvern had, they found, engaged a private room for the transaction of important business with some persons he expected in the morning, and plans were soon fully matured to trap them.

Keen slept little that night, and immediately after breakfast hastened with his Boston colleague to the hotel. The apartment assigned for Charles Malvern's use had been a bedroom, and a large wardrobe, with a high wing at each end, still remained in it. They tried if it would hold them, and with very little stooping and squeezing found it would do very well. The landlord soon gave them the signal to be on the alert, and they jammed themselves in, locking the wing doors on the inside. A minute or two afterwards Malvern and Mr. and Mrs. Williams entered, and, paper, pens and ink having been brought, business commenced in earnest.

It is needless to detail their conversation. It will suffice to say that it was manifest that Malvern, by a heavy bribe, had induced the accoucheur and his wife to conceal the birth of the male child, which, as Dan suspected, was that which Williams and his wife were bringing up as their own. Malvern had from the first the utmost anxiety that no harm should befall the infant. Mr. Malvern's nervous dread lest his confederates should be questioned had induced their hurried departure from Boston, and it now appeared that he had become aware of the suspicions entertained by Mr. Repton, and could not rest till the Williamses and the child were safely out of the country. It was now insisted that the agreement for a large annual payment to be made by Malvern should be fairly written out and signed in order that no future misunderstandings might arise. This Mr. Malvern strongly objected to; but finding that the doctor would accept no other terms, he sullenly complied, and at the same time reiterated that if any harm should befall the boy—to whom he intended, he said, to leave a handsome fortune—he would cease, regardless of consequences to himself, to pay the Williamses a single cent.

A silence of several minutes followed, broken only by the scratching of the pen on the paper. The time to Dan seemed an age, squeezed and stifled as he was in that narrow box, and so he afterwards learned it did to his fellow sufferer. At length Mr. Malvern said, in the same cautious whisper in which they had all hitherto spoken:

"This will do, I think," and he read what he had written. Mr. and Mrs. Williams signified their approval, and as matters were now fully ripe, Dan gently turned the key and very softly pushed open the door. The back of the trio were towards him, and as his shoes were off, and the apartment was thickly carpeted, he approached unseen. To the astonishment of the plotters, whose heads were bent eagerly over the important document, a hand was thrust silently but swiftly forward, and grasped the precious instrument. A fierce exclamation from Mr. Malvern, as he started from his seat, and a convulsive scream from Mrs. Williams as she fell back in

hers, followed. To add to the animation of the tableau, Dan's friend in the opposite wing emerged at the same moment from his hiding place.

Mr. Malvern comprehended the situation at a glance, and made a furious dash at the paper. Dan was quicker as well as stronger than he, and so he failed in his object. Resistance was, of course, out of the question; and in less than two hours they were speeding on the rail towards New York, accompanied by the child, whom they intrusted to Williams's servant.

Mr. Repton was still in town, and Mrs. Ashton, Mrs. Redwood and her unmarried sister, in their impatience, had arrived several days before. Keen had the pleasure of accompanying Mrs. Repton with the child and his temporary nurse to Osborne's Hotel, and he first feared for the excited mother's reason, so frenzied was her joy at the recover of her lost treasure. When placed in the cot beside the female infant the resemblance of the one to the other was certainly almost perfect. Dan never saw before nor since so complete a likeness. This was enough for the mother; but, fortunately, the detective, had much more satisfactory evidence, legally viewed, to establish the identity of the child in a court of law, should the necessity arise for doing so.

Here, as far as Dan is concerned, all positive knowledge of this curious piece of family history ends. Of subsequent transactions between the parties he had no personal cognizance. He only knew there was a failure of justice, and can pretty well guess from what motives. The parties he arrested in Boston were kept in strict custody for several days, but no inducement, no threats, could induce the institutors of the inquiry to appear against the detected criminals.

Mr. and Mrs. Ashton, Mrs. Redwood and her child left town the next day but one for Redwood Manor, and Mr. Repton coolly told the angry superintendent that "he had no instructions to prosecute." He, too, was speedily off, and the prisoners were necessarily discharged from custody.

Keen saw about three weeks afterwards in a morning paper that Mr. Malvern, "whom the birth of a posthumous heir had necessarily deprived of all chance of succession to the Redwood estates, was, with his family, about to leave for Italy." The expressed but uncompleted will of the deceased Thomas Redwood had been, it was further stated, carried into effect, and the legacy intended for Mr. Malvern was paid over to him. The Williamses never, to Dan's knowledge, attained to the dignity of a notice in the newspaper, but Keen believes they pursued their original intention of passing over to London.

WEIGHING A PERFUME

IT was the Italian physicist Salvioni who devised a microbalance of such extreme delicacy that it clearly demonstrates the loss of weight of musk by volatilization. Thus the invisible perfume floating off in the air is indirectly weighed. The essential part of the apparatus is a very thin thread of glass fixed at one end and extended horizontally. The microscopic objects to be weighed are placed upon the glass thread near its free end and the amount of flexure produced is observed with a miscroscope magnifying 100 diameters. A mote weighing one-thousandth of a milligram perceptibly bends the thread, so delicate is it.

THIS COMMUNITY HAS A GHOST

RESIDENTS of Carbon, a mining village, are greatly exercised over the weird flitting about late at night of what is declared to be a ghost clad in a snow white gown. This ghost, it is said, has on three different occasions between midnight and one o'clock aroused Peter Oleson, a Norwegian miner, who lives alone in a small house, with its strange rappings on his door, more vigorous than those of Poe's raven. Oleson arose promptly on each occasion, and what he believed was a young woman in a white robe stood on his step.

"What do you want? Come into my house—I would not hurt you," Oleson declares he told the strange figure, but he failed to get any answer, and when he would attempt to lay hands on it the ghost would give a shrill cry and disappear. On three succeeding nights the hobgoblin appeared at the Oleson home, and three times did the snow-white figure refuse the Norwegian's invitation to come into his house and to give him an account of its mysterious presence.

Frank Piso, an Italian neighbor was also called to his door in response to the "woman in white" rappings. Frank's experience was similar to those of Oleson.

William Maiers, Carbon, grocer for many years and a local "ghost authority," says the nocturnal visitor in the white dress is the ghost of a very pretty young woman captured by the Indians in their flight from Eastern Pennsylvania a century and three-quarters ago, with the intention of making her the bride of one of the Indian chief's sons. In trying to make her third and last attempt to escape from her captors the girl was killed and scalped near where Carbon is built.

He believes the ghost is embarrassed by the changes wrought during the last few decades.

The Meaning of Dreams

RAIN.—To dream of being in a shower of rain, if it be gentle and soft, denotes great success in your present undertakings; it is particularly favorable to lovers, as it denotes constancy, affection and a sweet temper; to the sailor it promises good fortune by sea, and that he will marry a beautiful girl, be happy and have children; if it be very heavy rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning, then expect to be assailed by thieves, to experience disappointments and misfortunes; such a dream denotes inconstancy and perfidy in your lover, and that another is preferred.

RAINBOW.—To dream you see a rainbow denotes great traveling and change of fortune; it also foretells sudden news of a very agreeable nature; it announces that your sweetheart is of good temper and very constant, and that you will be very happy in marriage.

RAVENS.—To dream you see a raven is a very unfavorable token, it denotes mischief and adversity; in love it shows falsehood, and to the married they forebode much mischief through the adultery of your conjugal partner; to the sailor they betoken shipwreck and much distress on a foreign shore.

ROSES.—To dream of those fragrant flowers during the season which brings them forth is a certain token of happiness and success; in love, they show your sweetheart to be faithful, and that you will marry and have many children; to the sailor they indicate a pleasant and prosperous voyage with some unexpected good fortune at sea; to the tradesman and farmer, increase of business and abundant crops. If a married woman dreams of them she will be shortly with child of a son, who will become a great man and render his parents very happy; to a maiden they show her sweetheart to be industrious, and one calculated to make her very happy in the connubial state. To dream of these flowers when out of season indicates distress and disappointment; to the tradesman they forebode bankruptcy and a prison; to the married, loss of their mates and children.

RIVER.—To dream you see a flowing river and that the waters are smooth and clear presages happiness and success in life; to the lover, it shows constancy and affection in the object of your love, and that, if you marry, you will pass a very contented and happy life, have fine children, mostly girls, who will be very beautiful; to the tradesman and farmer, it shows prosperity and gain; to the sailor, that his sweetheart will be kind and constant, and that his next voyage will be lucrative and pleasant. If the water appears disturbed and muddy, or has a yellow tinge, then it denotes that you will go to sea, where you will acquire riches. If you have a law suit, such a dream surely foretells that you will gain your case.

SHAVING.—To dream you are being shaved, or that your head has been shaved, is a very unfavorable omen; in love, it denotes treachery and disappointment, and in the married state infidelity and discord; to the tradesman it argues loss of goods and business; to the sailor, an unpleasant and stormy voyage, and that he will be defrauded on a foreign shore; if you have a law suit, it shows you that you are sold by your attorney, and will surely lose your cause; to the farmer, it prefigures bad crops and diseases among his live stock, also that he will be tricked by sharpers at a fair.

SHEEP.—To dream you see a flock of sheep feeding is a favorable omen, it denotes success in life; to the lover, it indicates your sweetheart to be faithful, of an amiable temper, and inclined to marry you; in the married state, it denotes children, who will be very happy, become rich, and be great comforts in the evening of life; to the tradesman, it foretells increase of business and accumulation of wealth, but also forewarns him that he has a servant unworthy of his confidence; to the sailor, nothing can be a greater sign of good luck, his next voyage will be pleasant and lucrative and his sweetheart kind and true. To dream you see them dispersing and runing away from you shows that pretended friends are endeavoring to do you an injury, and that your children will meet with persecution and great troubles; in love, such a dream shows your sweetheart to be fickle and little calculated to make you happy. To dream you see shearing is indicative of loss of property and the affections of the person you love, also of your liberty.

SHOES.—To dream you have a new pair of shoes denotes much success in life and triumph over your enemies; in love, they prognosticate speedy marriage and infidelity; to the married state an increase of children. If a maiden dreams she has a new pair of shoes, it denotes that a man will attempt to be rude with her, but that her honor will be saved by the interposition of a stranger, who will either marry her or some friend of hers. To dream your shoes are worn out and bad shows decay in circumstances and loss of friends; in love, it foretells the infidelity of your love, who will marry another. After such a dream I advise those who can to change their place of residence, their present situation being hereby denoted to be unfavorable for them.

(*To be continued*)

Current News

A DELICATE OPERATION

A piece of bone taken from the thigh of J. C. Lang of Kennewick was grafted upon a fractured vertebra of his neck a few days ago in a hospital at Yakima, Wash., in an effort to repair a fracture. Mr. Lang was injured in Kennewick last fall, when a keg in the grapejuice plant there rolled upon him. The fact that the vertebrae had been fractured was discovered by the use of the X-ray.

GRAFTS OWN SKIN ON WIFE

Dr. Orlando P. Scott, of Chicago, received the congratulations of his medical friends for the double operation that he performed recently with himself and his wife as the patients. He took from one of his own legs twelve inches of skin which he grafted on the right leg and ankle of his wife, thus saving her from the loss of the limb. To-day the two are reported doing well at the American Hospital.

The operation was performed by Dr. Scott in the amphitheatre of the hospital. More than a score of physicians, nurses, and students gathered to watch. Dr. Scott was formerly a medical officer in France.

LENGTH OF UNITED STATES COAST LINE

Mainly in connection with the problem of national defense, inquiry is often made as to what is the length of the coast line of the United States. According to a statement issued by the Government survey, the answer to this question is twofold, since it depends on the extent to which the actual coast line is followed in making the measurement. There is a wide difference between a measurement that takes into account only the general lines of the coast and one in which every little indentation is followed. Measured along its general trend the coast line of the United States and Alaska exceeds 11,500 miles, while the detailed coast line measured as closely as possibly on large scale maps is approximately 91,000 miles. On the same basis the general coast lines of the insular possessions and the Canal Zone have a total length of about 5,400 miles and the detailed coast lines a total length somewhat in excess of 12,000 miles.

LONG HAIR GROWS ON SMALL OF HER BACK

Bearded women and dog-faced boys are only extreme cases of a not uncommon phenomenon called hypertrichosis, which means an abnormal or excessive growth of hair. Jo-Jo of the circus was covered all over with hair, like a dog, but such a condition as this is extremely rare.

In women with much hair on their faces the type is usually inherited. Brunettes are much more likely to have it than blondes. An unusual case, because of its situation, is reported to the Journal of the American Medical Association by Dr. Andrew J. Gilmour of New York. It is that of a young married woman who was born with a patch of soft dark hair a few inches long right in the small of the back. She cuts it off about once a year, and now it is eight inches long. There is no sign of a mole, the hair growing out of normal skin covering an area between four and five inches wide.

BOTTOM FALLS OUT OF WELL

"What's coming off up there?"

A spooky, subterranean voice emanated from the two-inch well pipe Dode Smith was pulling from the ground at his home near Petersburg, Ind.

The well had gone dry suddenly and Dode, with the aid of his brother George and John Watson, was pulling the pipe from the soil.

The trio were stricken speechless, and as they stared at one another the mysterious voice again was heard:

"Hey! S'matter up there?"

This time Mrs. Dode Smith heard the voice, and she likewise was startled.

"Your well is down here," the voice explained. Then Dode Smith had a hunch.

"That you, George?" he shouted down the pipe. An affirmative answer and considerable explanation revealed that a coal miner, in cutting a new shaft, had tunneled under Smith's well, whereupon the bottom had dropped out, dampening the miners.

A REMARKABLE WELL

One of the most remarkable wells in Oklahoma is owned by J. C. McSpadden, at Tahlequah. This well not only furnishes an abundance of pure water, almost ice-cold in the summer time, but it affords a supply of chilled air, which is utilized for a cooling plant that keeps the McSpadden home cooler on the hottest day than any summer resort within a thousand miles. It is a freak well all around. When the well was sunk it was for a cistern. When about fifty feet deep the bottom broke through, revealing a sort of cavern, in which there was a tremendous flow of ice-cold water. Apparently this is an inexhaustible supply, for the well was sunk years ago, and the well water has remained at the same level ever since. Taking advantage of the freak well's supply of cold air, McSpadden sealed the top of the well with a concrete cap and placed pipes in it. Through one of these he draws his water supply. Through the others he draws a supply of cold air that is piped through every room of his six-room house.

HOW ORDER OF THE GARTER GOT ITS NAME

The Order of the Garter, the highest honor the British sovereign may bestow and one of the most famous orders of knighthood and chivalry in history, was instituted by Edward III. in 1849. It was at first known as the Order of St. George and membership was limited to twenty-five.

Edward, having been victorious on land and sea and having King David of Scotland as prisoner, initiated the order in recogniton of the valor of his bravest knights. While not at first called the Order of the Garter, the garter was given preeminence among the insignia. It is of blue, bordered with gold, with the inscription in old French, "Evil to him who evil thereof thinks." There is a tradition that the Countess of Salisbury, while dancing, lost her garter, which her partner, the king, stooped to pick up and return, whereat some of the courtiers tittered. At that Edward wrathfully shouted, "Evil to him who evil thereof thinks," and declared he would make that garter the most glorious emblem in the land.

CUTS TEETH AT 84

A third set of teeth was cut by a Memphis man of 84 recently.

N. D. Starr, of Memphis, found himself in need of a set of artificial substitutes for the teeth provided by nature. But when he visited his dentist the price was too high, and he decided to go toothless. However, through one of the unaccountable happenings which sometimes upset all rules, Mr. Starr discovered that he was cutting twelve new teeth. They are almost through now, although they are not very useful yet, owing to the fact that his gums are sore, in a fashion familiar to all mothers of teething infants or to boys and girls whose second teeth are replacing their baby teeth, and even to the older boys and girls who proudly announce, "I'm cutting a wisdom tooth."

Dentists doubtless will contend that such a thing cannot happen. But Mr. Starr knows that he now has teeth where no teeth were before. Moreover, he says his eyesight is better than it was several years ago, and that so far from his vigor being impaired by advancing years he feels stronger and more youthful than he did when he was 70.

STOLE GIRL'S CLOTHES

Four pretty University of California Coeds are minus four full sets of all the divers and sundry pieces of apparel that girls wear, following a swim at the Piedmont Baths in Oakland, Cal., during which swim some mean burglar of one sex or another entered the girls' dressing rooms and just walked right away with the Coeds' clothing. The girls, all of them prominent in college activities are Miss June Southwick of Los Angeles, Miss Dorothy Rossman of Portland, Miss Katherine Knecht of Los Angeles, and Miss Lois Topham of San Jose.

The girls, after discovering the disappearance of their clothing, were obliged to go back for another swim and await the arrival of apparel from their homes. After the girls were cold from swimming and as angry as they could be, detectives arrived on the scene and loaned the girls their overcoats.

No other lockers were entered by thieves, leading to the belief of the authorities that some person must have given the entering bathers the "once over" to pick out the best attired ones. The Coeds did not appreciate the compliment.

LANDLORDS GOT THE WORST OF IT

The oldest known written code of laws in the world, prepared 3,000 B. C., has been discovered in clay tablets from Nippur, at the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

The laws, which have just been translated by Abbe Schneil, of Paris, deal with responsibilities of hired servants, with trespass on farms and orchards, harboring of slaves, etc.

One interesting statute provides that rentals must run for three years in case a man has taken over a house the owner does not know how to manage. This may mean that all rentals were for that term. It is inferred he could not raise the rental meantime.

In case a slave bore children to her master she and the offspring were free, and if the master married the slave the children became legitimate. The laws show a high state of civilization in 3,000 B. C.

SOME STRANGE PLANTS

Of all the plant freaks in the world, the "telegraph plant," which comes from India, is one of the queerest. Each of its large leaves is composed of three parts. During the day the largest portion stretches out toward the sun, so as to catch the full warmth and brightness, but when night comes on the big leaf turns down, while each of the small petals works day and night, moving, as it were, independently.

Then there is the strange fishing plant, under the sea, which opens and shuts periodically, like a big mouth. When fishes are near enough to this wonderful plant, all of a sudden it closes its "mouth" and swallows them.

In that wonderful land, South America, there is a bush or plant which is like an octopus. An explorer not so very long ago was in the district where the plant grows, says the Philadelphia Inquirer. Suddenly he heard a howl of pain from his dog. He rushed to the rescue, and saw that the animal was firmly caught in the ropelike meshes and tentacles of a big plant, which were wrapped around its body. He had to cut the dog free, and when his hand came in contact with the fibrous meshes they became blistered.

ARTIFICIAL CASCADE 2,200 YEARS OLD

The recent feat of a Minneapolis landscape architect in building in a local park a waterfall forty feet high that looks perfectly natural was surpassed more than two thousand years ago by the Roman Consul, Curius Dentatus, and the famous Cascades of the Marmore, near Terni, Italy, over which Byron grew so eloquent in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," are the existing evidence.

In those early days there was a great swamp in the country that now lies at the head of the falls, and this was separated from a precipice 120 feet high by a great bank of rock. Every year this swamp would overflow and flood all the country for miles around in the direction of what is now the city of Rieti and the town of Piediluca. Below the precipice was the valley of the Nera, a rapid, dark stream flowing from the Apennine Mountains through the savage gorge below Narni and out into the Roman Campagna to join the Tiber.

As that land above the precipice was rich for farming, Curius Dentatus, then Consul of Rome, decided to stop the annual flooding. Accordingly he cut down the great ledge of rock that separated the swamp from the precipice and opened a way for the water to flow over the cliff. This was a stupendous feat of engineering in those days. As the swamp was fed by a good sized river, this formed the famous cascade that is still one of the most beautiful in all the world; the swamp was drained and the high lying country about Piediluca and Rieti has ever since been one of the richest wheat lands of Italy.

MUSICAL SANDS ALL OVER WORLD

Much has been written recently about the "singing sands of Michigan," and Science publishes an article by Alfred R. Ledoux, which tells of many other places where the same phenomenon is to be found. Marco Polo mentioned it; there are several cases in the African and Asiatic deserts where it has been observed. In one of the Hawaiian Islands is an old graveyard rapidly being buried by coral sands blown by the wind. When the wind is right, passing boats catch a sound from this like the wail of a lost spirit.

On the coast of Lower California is a spot which emits at times a sound like the tolling of a muffled bell. The late Dr. H. Carrington Bolton on his expedition to the Jebel Nagous, in the Sinai desert, near the Isthmus of Suez, heard at the base of a mountain a song of several notes rising and falling, with a continuous deep undertone like an organ note. The cause is described as follows:

"The winds continuously blow this sand up against the sides of the hill, and impelled by the wind it rushes up the slopes, emitting a multitude of tiny, tinkling notes, which when combined make a considerable volume of sound. Then, just as the waves of the sea, driven up the beach, rush downward again, so the sand blown up the steep incline continually slides back, the angle of rest being about 31 degrees. It is the returning flow that gives out the steady undertone, increased by the echo from a sandstone cliff, and varying with the ever-changing wind."

Mr. Ledoux calls attention to the fact that when walking barefoot on musical sands, or running one's hand through them, there is felt a distinct tingling sensation, similar to that felt when dipping the hand into a solution in which nascent oxygen is being generated.

BUTCHER PURCHASES GOLD BRICK

Beware of a rugged miner arrayed in a wide sombrero, red flannel shirt, corduroy breeches, heavy boots and with a pick slung over his shoulder. That was the warning sent out by the Philadelphia Detective Bureau after Eugene Sabo, a butcher, of Manayunk, unfolded his tale of woe.

Sabo reported that as a result of his encounter with the moving picture miner and several of his friends, the profits of his butcher shop have been curtailed to the tune of $2,400. Two weeks ago, he told the sleuths, a man who announced himself as a Mr. Barlock and a vender of refrigerators, entered his shop and attempted to make a sale.

Although the butcher stoutly maintained he was well supplied with refrigerators, the salesman continued to make daily calls. The other Friday, after another rebuke from the meat cutter, Barlock casually mentioned something about a friend, an Arizona miner, who was in the city selling unrefined gold. An investment of $2,400 in the raw material would bring $5,000 after the stuff was refined Barlock related.

This seemed to interest Sabo, and he expressed a desire to meet the miner. Barlock and the miner then reported at the butcher shop. From a suitcase the miner extracted a handful of "ore" and threw it on the meat block.

"The real stuff, fresh from the Arizona mountains," he remarked, as he pointed out the shining particles of "gold."

Sabo expressed his doubts, but Barlock was on the job with a "jeweler," who just happened to be around the corner. And to the delight of the butcher the jeweler said the stuff was genuine. Whereupon Sabo handed over $2,400 and received in return a suitcase filled with clay bespeckled with brass filings.

Not until later in the day when he carted the suitcase to the central city to have its contents examined did he discover he bought a nice array of brass particles and clay that was no better than the stuff in his own back yard. Then he rushed to the police.

According to the butcher he bore no resemblance to Grover Cleveland Bergdoll, hero of the melodrama "Hunting Gold in the Maryland Hills."

REFUSE TO PAY UNJUST PRICES

The most worshipped household god in the world is known as the Ouija Board, and the most feared devil the H. C. L. Every family has its Ouija, and not only whole families but sometimes whole neighborhoods gather in the early evening to ask Ouija questions as to the future.

"Ouija is the spirit supposed, by the quaint beliefs of the worldlings, to inhabit the Ouija Board, a simplex triangle of wood with wheels at the base and a pencil at the apex. Ouija is believed to reveal herself in writing as she moves the pencil over paper. The worldlings apparently believe every word that Ouija writes; nevertheless they treat the spirit with great hardness. Never have I seen a shrine or altar to her name.

"H. C. L. is a devil who makes every worldling moan many times per day. His full name is the High Cost of Living, but all the world is too excited over his alleged misdeeds to use his full title. Ouija is said to have made but one prediction concerning the end of H. C. L. and that is that he would lose his power when all the world refused to pay tribute to him."

Thus might a man from Mars report on the two favorite subjects of conversation in America. No stranger to our customs could be greatly blamed for misinterpreting the attention that "Ouija" gets. The country is in a rather "Ouija" state of mind. Instead of getting its feet down on the ground and solving our most pressing problem, the cost of living, by increasing production and building up the country's capital through increased savings, it prefers to spend its increased earning as freely as may be for high-priced articles, and ask "Ouija" what can be done about it.

As the Government Loan Organization has consistently pointed out, prices will make a permanent step downward when people refuse to pay unjust prices. The money they have saved while waiting will thus profit them by buying more goods. In addition, if they have had their money invested while waiting in some such security as Government Savings Stamps, it will have earned interest for them. Whether for temporary or permanent savings, Government Savings Stamps and Treasury Savings Certificates are an ideal form of investment, since they are always worth more than was paid for them, and are quickly and easily converted into cash.

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31 "Law-Maker and Law-Breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector John Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue In the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trailed by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robert W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Charles F. Oursler.
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49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
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Hammam-Meskhutin, or the accursed baths, are situated in the wilds of Alegeria. If they were in any more accessible part of the world they would no doubt seriously interfere with the popularity of places like Carlsbad and Homburg, for the surroundings are beautiful as the natural phenomena are wonderful.

The temperature of the water is no less than 203 degrees Fahrenheit, which, taking into consideration the height of the source above sea level, is just about boiling point, and clouds of steam arise from the earth in different directions, as well as from a mass of waterfall. Where the waters rise the surface of the rock is thickly incrusted with carbonate of lime and resembles white marble. The largest volume of water falls into a beautiful wooded glen, and the rock over which it passes has the appearance of a huge petrified calcareous deposit. Above the fall and scattered about are numerous pools of bubbling water, the bottoms of which are rendered creamy white by the deposits. In the waste water that runs away below the falls Arabs may be seen washing.

SOMETHING TO KNOW

A 16-inch electric fan handles about 2,600 cubic feet of air in a minute.

European Russia is believed to have 13,000,000 horsepower in undeveloped open water power.

New aluminum foil for wrapping purposes is only one-sixth of one-hundredth of an inch thick.

Fireproof, waterproof and odorless paper has been made from a seaweed by an English scientist.

The first known use of asbestos was in the manufacture of cremation robes for the ancient Romans.

A tray which can be clamped to the bottom of a syrup jar to catch its drippings is a household novelty.

A new cabinet for phonographs and records is mounted on two legs and two wheels so that it can be moved easily.

Bread made with sea water instead of fresh water is recommended by a French scientist for invalids and children.

Tests made in Ireland by scientists have shown that the wind carries some disease bacteria 200 feet and as high as sixty feet into the air.

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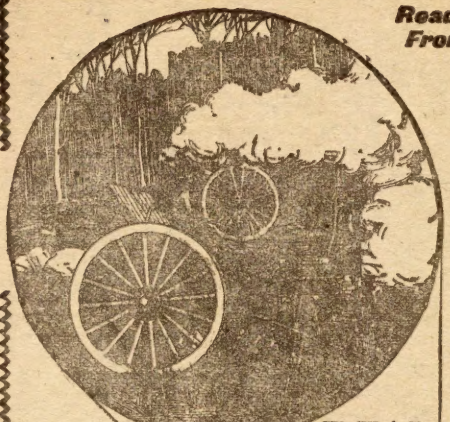

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This Moving Picture Machine which I want to send you FREE, gives clear and life-like Moving Pictures as are shown at any regular Moving Picture show. It flashes moving pictures on the sheet before you. This Machine and Box of Film are FREE—absolutely free to every boy in this land who wants to write for an Outfit, free to girls and free to older people. Read MY OFFER below, which shows you how to get this Marvelous Machine.

Read These Letters From Happy Boys:

Shows Clear Pictures

I have been very slow in sending you an answer. I received my Moving Picture Machine a few weeks ago and I think it is a dandy, and it shows the pictures clear just as you said it would. I am very proud of it. I thank you very much for it and I am glad to have it. I gave an entertainment two days after I got it. Leopold Lamontagne, 54 Summer Ave., Central Falls, R. I.

Sold His for $10.00 and Ordered Another

Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for $10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Eberth, Mandan, N. Dak.

Would Not Give Away for $25.00

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for $25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Bresky, Jeffersville, Pa. Box 34.

Better Than a $12.00 Machine

I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. I have seen a $12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Lineberry, care of Revolution Store, Greenboro, N. C.

How You Can Get This Great Moving Picture Machine—Read My Wonderful Offer to You

HERE IS what you are to do in order to get this amazing Moving Picture Machine and the real Moving Pictures: Send your name and address—that is all. Write name and address very plainly. Mail to-day. As soon as I receive it I will mail you 20 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors. These pictures are printed in many colors and among the titles are such subjects as *"Betsy Ross Making the First American Flag"*—*"Washington at Home,"*—*"Battle of Lake Erie,"* etc. I want you to distribute these premium pictures on a special 30-cent offer among the people you know. When you have distributed the 20 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected $6.00. Send the $6.00 to me and I will immediately send you FREE the Moving Picture Machine with complete Outfit and the Box of Film.

50,000 of these machines have made 50,000 boys happy. Answer at once. Be the first in your town to get one.

M. CROFTON, Secy.,
615 W. 43d Street, Dept. 521, New York

PLEASE USE COUPON

Free Coupon

Good for Moving Picture Offer

Simply cut out this Free Coupon, pin it to a sheet of paper, mail to me with your name and address written plainly, and I will send you the 20 Pictures at once.

Address .....

M. CROFTON, Secy.,
615 W. 43d St., Dept. 521, New York

THE PIPE FISH

The Kangaroo has always seemed to have the monopoly of that convenient way of carrying its babies in a pouch, but it has been discovered that a fish has the same useful receptacle which it uses for the same purpose. The pipe fish, as it is called from the length of its jaws, has a pocket on the under side of its body nearly half its length. It is found in the male species only, and is the only part of its body which is unprotected by large bat plates, which takes the place of scales in its protective armor. If a pipe fish is taken from the water and its little ones shaken out of the pouch back into the water they always seem either unable or disinclined to run away. But if the father is placed in the water again, all the small fish immediately swim back into the pouch. These curious little creatures have prehensile tails, which they use to hold on to the seaweed to prevent themselves being carried away by the tide. The pipe fish is similar to the small eel, being about a foot in length and an inch in thickness, but unlike the eel, it has a very long jaw

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